A Poet's Reich

Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture

A Poet's Reich

Politics and Culture in the George Circle

Edited by
Melissa S. Lane and Martin A. Ruehl

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Melissa S. Lane and Martin A. Ruehl
Princeton and Cambridge, May 2011

Abbreviations

GA	Stefan George, *Gesamt-Ausgabe der Werke: Endgültige Fassung*, 18 vols. (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1927–34)
LBI	Leo Baeck Institute, New York
StGA	Stefan George Archiv, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart
SW	Stefan George, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Georg Peter Landmann and Ute Oelmann, 18 vols. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981–)
WSG	Olga Marx and Ernst Morwitz, *The Works of Stefan Georg Rendered into English*, 2nd ed, rev. and enlarged edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974)
ZT	Hans-Jürgen Seekamp, Raymond C. Ockenden, and Marita Keilson, *Stefan George: Leben und Werk; Eine Zeittafel* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini Presse, 1972)

Introduction

Melissa S. Lane and Martin A. Ruehl

Stefan George (1868–1933) was one of the most important figures in modern German culture. His poetry, in its originality and impact, was ranked by many contemporaries with that of Goethe and Hölderlin, and the two collections of his early verse, *Das Jahr der Seele* (1897) and *Der Teppich des Lebens* (1899), still stand as landmarks in the history of early modernism, alongside his celebrated translations of Dante and Baudelaire. George's significance, however, transcended the sphere of literature. At the beginning of the twentieth century, he gathered around himself a coterie of predominantly younger men, later known as the *George Kreis*, who subscribed to his vision of "das schöne Leben" and his comprehensive program of cultural renewal.[1] George and his followers considered themselves the embodiment of "das geheime Deutschland,"[2] a kind of counter-cultural nucleus or avant-garde that stood in radical opposition to the "official" culture of Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany. Some of his disciples were artists themselves; most of them occupied academic positions, notably in the fields of history, German literature, and classics. Their works, in particular their hero-worshipping biographies of great political or cultural figures, affected Germany's educated middle class no less than George's precious-prophetic verse. Above and beyond these publications, the George Circle exerted a peculiar fascination on a new generation of *Bildungsbürger* because of its almost sectarian exclusivity, its *männerbündisch*-homoerotic ethos, and its quasi-religious rituals.

Especially after the publication of his penultimate collection of poems, *Der Stern des Bundes*, on the eve of the Great War, George acquired a kind of cult following that extended well beyond the small group of acolytes — never more than twenty — who made up the core of the Circle. In 1916, after only a brief introductory meeting with him, the political economist Kurt Singer waxed lyrical about George in a letter to the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, remarking that his life had become ever more imbued with the conviction "dass heute kein Mensch reiner und schöpferischer das Göttliche verkörpert als George — doch das ist nicht genug: dass der Knoten der Zeit und der Erneuerung sich in George schürzt [. . .] Es ist, als ob alle grossen geistigen Ströme sich in diesem Menschen kreuzten und sich zur Kugel ballten."[3] The twenty-nine-year-old Walter

Benjamin would wait for hours outside Heidelberg Castle just to catch a glimpse of "der Meister,"[4] as George was reverently addressed by his followers,[5] and possibly developed his concept of "auratic art" in the light of George's poetry.[6] Mesmerized by their unique mixture of lyrical expressiveness and formal stylization, the young Theodor Adorno set George's poems to music. So did Arnold Schönberg and Anton Webern.

Yet George's reach went deeper. His exhortation, in the opening lines of a poem from *Der Stern des Bundes* — "Wer je die flamme umschritt / Bleibe der flamme trabant!" — became something like a mantra for the *Wandervogel* German youth movement and, subsequently, the Hitler Youth,[7] thus partly confirming Georg Lukács's 1908 prediction that George's seemingly cold and exclusive compositions would one day become *Volkslieder*.[8] According to Benjamin, his poems provided a legitimation and "Asyl" for those scions of the German middle class who had become alienated from the bourgeois ways of their parents' generation.[9] They even inspired the antibourgeois rhetoric of the socialist revolutionaries in the Munich Soviet Republic (April–May 1919), who turned George's apocalyptic vision "Der Einzug" — "Voll ist die zeit ·/ Weckt was gefeit / Schlief mit dumpfem gegrolle"[10] — into one of their marching songs.[11] George affected the German middle-class youth not just through his poetry, however. Throughout the 1920s, his educational ideals, notably his critique of scientific positivism and his call for a holistic form of *Bildung*, based on the ancient Greek model of the master-disciple relationship and designed to inspire the vital, creative impulses of a new intellectual elite, influenced the teaching and research agendas in the humanities faculties of various German universities. The inscription over the entrance of the new auditorium erected at Heidelberg University in 1930/31, "Dem lebendigen Geist," chosen by the noted Germanist Friedrich Gundolf, George's longtime favorite disciple, encapsulated these ideals and demonstrated their increasingly prominent position in German academe.[12]

The impact that George and his Circle had on the development of *Geisteswissenschaften* in the interwar period was particularly pronounced. With his intellectual biography of Goethe, bearing the programmatically simple title *Goethe* (1916), Gundolf had set a precedent for a new type of scholarship that aimed at the vivid, inspirational (*anschaulich*) representation of historical personalities in their essential totality (*Gestalt*), discarding the dissecting, analytical gaze of the "scientist" and turning the great individual of the past into a myth and model for the present.[13] Ernst Bertram, like Gundolf a scholar of German literature and, since 1906, an associate of the Circle, took a similar approach in his highly acclaimed (and hugely popular) *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie*, which appeared with the Circle's "house publisher" Georg Bondi in 1918. Ernst Kantorowicz, who joined the Circle in 1919, introduced its mythopoeic method to the field of medieval history with his best-selling biography of the Hohenstaufen

emperor Frederick II. Like Bertram's *Nietzsche*, Kantorowicz's *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (1927) was published by Georg Bondi, adorned on the cover and title page with a spinning swastika, the emblem reserved for the Circle's scholarly books or *Geistbücher*, and, lacking both footnotes and a bibliography, ostentatiously addressed to a nonacademic audience. More distant associates of the Circle such as Georg Simmel and Hans-Georg Gadamer incorporated central aspects of George's thinking into their philosophical systems.[14] Karl Jaspers thought that the mystical elements of Martin Heidegger's early writings bore the imprint of the George Circle.[15] Karl Reinhardt, Walter F. Otto, Paul Friedlaender, and Werner Jaeger, four classical scholars who transformed the discipline of *Altertumswissenschaft* in the 1930s, all drew, to varying degrees, on George in their critique of the new brand of positivist philology inaugurated by Wilamowitz and in their reinvention of the *das Klassische* as an educational and cultural ideal.[16]

Even skeptical observers acknowledged the George Circle as an epicenter of the cultural and intellectual revolutions that transformed Germany in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Max Weber, though he disapproved of George's stance as *poeta vates* (the poet as prophet) and his tendency towards self-deification,[17] greatly admired his poetry and personality.[18] According to Thomas Karlauf, Weber's notion of "charismatic rule" was partly formed by his impression of George's role in the Circle.[19] In the early 1920s, Thomas Mann, well aware that they considered him a second-rate author,[20] nonetheless believed that "die Wahrheit und das Leben" could only be found in the sphere of George and his followers. As he confided in his diary on 1 August, 1921: "Ich wüßte nicht, wo sonst das Positiv-Entgegengesetzte zur Hoffnungslosigkeit der Fortschritts-Civilisation und des intellektualistischen Nihilismus gefunden werden sollte, als in dieser [George's] Lehre des Leibes und Staates. Dies zu finden kann mich die Tatsache nicht hindern, daß auch ich mich mit verneint fühlen muß."[21]

In the wake of the First World War, George thus came to represent a "geistige Gegenmacht," as Benjamin put it,[22] which shaped the thinking of intellectuals, students, academics, university officials (indeed, entire faculties), sections of the civil service as well as members of the Reichswehr and, later, the Wehrmacht.[23] Though his Circle dissolved shortly after his death in December 1933 and though he soon became persona non grata in the Third Reich, whose functionaries had initially sought to claim him as the "prophet" of the Nazi revolution, George's influence extended well beyond the interwar period and left its stamp on the culture of the new West German state. In his recent book on George's "Nachleben," Ulrich Raulff reconstructs the various Georgean networks that shaped the intellectual and political life of the Bonn Republic in the 1950s and 1960s. As Raulff shows, some of the foremost "federal families," notably the

Weizsäckers, Pichts, and Beckers (but also Carlo Schmid and Marion Countess Dönhoff) were attached to the Circle and its values.

In particular, Hellmut Becker, son of the Prussian *Kultusminister* Carl Heinrich Becker, who had been responsible for the appointment of numerous followers of George to prominent academic positions in the Weimar period,[24] was deeply indebted to George's pedagogical ideals and, as one of West Germany's most influential *Kulturpolitiker*, saw to it that some of these ideals were incorporated into the large-scale *Bildungsreform* of the 1960s and 1970s.[25] But George's emphasis on *Anschauung*, *Ganzheitlichkeit*, and *die Tat* (the deed), as well as his neo-Platonic notion of the charismatic older teacher entrusted with the total education of his (male) charges,[26] also influenced the doctrines of *Reformpädagogik*, which were first formulated by educational reformers such as Gustav Wyneken in the early twentieth century and put into practice at some of Germany's most prestigious boarding schools — for instance, the Odenwaldschule, established in 1910 near Heppenheim in the state of Hesse and run by Hellmut Becker's protégé Gerold Becker from 1969 to 1985.[27]

It is thus no exaggeration to say that George and his Circle represented one of the most powerful "Ausstrahlungsphänomene" (in Gottfried Benn's term) in the cultural and intellectual history of modern Germany after Nietzsche.[28] As some of the above comments suggest, this "Ausstrahlungsphänomen" also had a political dimension. Much ink has been spilt, especially since the late 1960s, over the supposedly "reactionary," fundamentally antimodern *Weltanschauung* embraced by George and his followers. George's defenders have invested an almost equivalent amount of ink to clear him of these charges by showing that his concerns were exclusively poetical or aesthetic, that there was no connection, in other words, between his program of cultural renewal and the far-reaching demands for political renewal circulating in the Weimar period, let alone the political program of National Socialism. Both the detractors and the defenders tend to assume that George's standpoint remained essentially consistent from the foundation of the Circle around 1903 to its collapse thirty years later, in the aftermath of his death in December 1933. A path leading beyond the standoff can begin with a careful consideration of the ways in which his views and those of his followers changed in the course of this period. This introduction will sketch a view of the complex and intertwined evolution of culture and politics in the Circle that identifies many of the themes considered — often from sharply differing vantage points — in the individual contributions to the volume.

In the 1890s and 1900s, George's ideal of a "römisches Deutschland" stood in sharp contrast to the nationalist orthodoxy of the Second Reich. His celebration of the South in *Der Teppich des Lebens* (1899) and *Der Siebente Ring* (1907)[29] represented an implicit critique of the prussophile patriotism inaugurated by Heinrich von Treitschke, who, in the aftermath

of Bismarck's bitter struggle with Catholicism in the 1870s (the so-called *Kulturkampf*), denounced Rome as the ultramontane enemy of the Second Reich and demanded the elimination of all Latin influences for the sake of German cultural autonomy.[30] While Treitschke's followers glorified the Hohenzollern and their colonization of the Slavonic and Baltic lands, the George Circle exalted the Holy Roman Empire of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. For the former, the symbol of Germanness was the *furor teutonicus* of Hermann the Cheruscan (16 BC–AD 21);[31] for the latter, it was the restrained, classical beauty of a thirteenth-century equestrian statue in Bamberg Cathedral, the so-called "Bamberger Reiter," whom Ernst Kantorowicz would call a Mediterranean Germanic type in his celebrated 1927 biography of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II.[32]

After 1918, however, this cosmopolitan spirit gradually evaporated and gave way to more narrowly patriotic sentiments. To some extent, this change was determined by the self-consciously guarded liminal position of the Circle with regard to German society and culture. In the Wilhelmine era, George and his disciples had been anxious to distinguish the Germano-Roman ideals of "das geheime Deutschland" from the "deutschnational" jingoism of the official Germany. But when the Imperial Government of the Second Reich was replaced by the more moderate, cosmopolitan politicians of the Weimar Coalition, the Circle, in its turn, preserved its oppositional stance by becoming more "deutschnational." This reversal was facilitated by the fact that the experience of the Great War and its aftermath[33] — Versailles, the war-guilt debate, reparations, the occupation of the Rhineland and the Ruhr — had aroused national sentiment among the members of the Circle. The "outlawing" of the German people during the war and even more after Versailles, Edgar Salin remarked in his memoirs, was depressing and unbearable for the members of the Circle: "Stärker als irgendwann vorher . . . wies daher der Weg der Ehre in den Jahren von 1919–1932 für die Dichter-Freunde und für das deutsche Volk in naheverwandte Richtung."[34] In particular, Friedrich Wolters, who became — after Friedrich Gundolf's break with George — arguably the central figure among the disciples, began to strike a much more politicized and assertively Germanic note in his publications during the 1920s, celebrating Goethe as a patriotic, "vaterländischer" poet and glorifying Germany's struggle against her Latin, "welsch," enemies over the centuries, from the Investiture Controversy to the Franco-Prussian War.[35]

Although George was not uncritical of Wolters's political activism,[36] both his poetic and his private utterances reveal the extent to which he shared this new, stridently patriotic vision of Germanness.[37] If his earlier works had been indebted to the spirit of Hölderlin, the models for George's new collection of poems, *Das neue Reich* (1928), seemed to be Ernst Moritz Arndt and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Seeing his own vocation as "Dichter der Deutschen,"[38] George prophesied Germany's purification

from shame, her coming rebirth, and her universal mission — that one day, Germany, the heart of the continent, would redeem the world.[39] Perhaps because, as a native of the region, he was offended by the occupation of the Rhineland,[40] the Master, who had been so greatly influenced by French poetry in the 1890s, now began to show strong signs of Francophobia and at one point even demanded that the French be exterminated.[41] In this period, George also reevaluated another component of his earlier cosmopolitan conception of *Deutschtum*, the German "Drang nach Süden."[42] Even more notable, perhaps, are his frequent diatribes in the 1920s against the Curia and the "Pfaffen," which stand in sharp contrast to the predominantly pro-Catholic sentiment of the Circle around the turn of the century. Edith Landmann recalled his lashing out bitterly against the egalitarianism of the Catholic religion and its lack of interest, its "Desinteressement," in Germany and in European culture in general.[43] Bismarck, Wilhelm II, and "Prussianness," on the other hand, George now saw in a more positive light, and observed, obviously with an eye on the last of the Hohenzollern, that a bad emperor is better than no emperor at all.[44]

The most ominous transformation of the concept of Germanness in the Circle, however, was its increasing preoccupation with the issue of race. In 1920, one of Wolters's followers, Kurt Hildebrandt, published a treatise on racial hygiene, entitled *Norm und Entartung des Menschen*.[45] George apparently felt ambivalent about the idea of a state-directed eugenic policy,[46] but nonetheless defended Hildebrandt's book against the criticism of Salin.[47] Wolters spoke of the "minderwertige Rassen" of the French in his 1923 pamphlet "Der Rhein unser Schicksal"[48] and extolled the "heiligster Herd unserer Rasse" in his "Blättergeschichte."[49] The Master, for his part, seems to have conceived this "holiest herd" in European rather than strictly Germanic terms.[50] It was the "weiße Art"[51] of Western Europe that, he believed, had to be saved from the "gelben Affen" of Asia,[52] as well as from miscegenation with the African races. According to George, the decline of the French was due to interracial marriages,[53] or what he called "Blutschmach" (blood-shame) in his 1917 poem "Der Krieg."[54] The racial divide, for him, thus lay between Europe on the one hand and Africa as well as Asia (to which he apportioned Russia) on the other, not between Germanic and "welsch," or Aryan and Semitic, peoples.

This does not mean that George, as is sometimes claimed, was straightforwardly philosemitic or that his Circle was a "haven of retreat" for German-Jewish intellectuals.[55] Given the large number of Jews among his immediate entourage (they included the Hanna and Karl Wolfskehl, Friedrich and Ernst Gundolfs, Berthold Vallentin, Ernst Morwitz, Julius and Edith Landmann, Erich von Kahler, Edgar Salin, Wilhelm Stein, and both Gertrud and Ernst Kantorowicz),[56] strains of antisemitism can be found to have run surprisingly deep in the Circle.

The Master himself, while he declared that all loyal disciples, whether Catholic, Protestant or Jew, were of his race,[57] also professed that Jews were a different type of people, whose ability to experience things was not as deep as that of others. He would never allow them, he told Ernst Robert Curtius, to be in the majority in the Circle.[58] Hildebrandt reports that already during the First World War, George taught that the Jews were agents of decomposition in the political and the intellectual state and that he was increasingly dissatisfied with their attitude.[59] As for the disciples, there were not infrequent antisemitic remarks *intra muros*, especially from the "third generation" (Max Kommerell, Johann Anton, Woldemar Uxkull-Gyllenband),[60] sometimes with regard to other Circle members.[61] Kommerell, George's youthful favorite in the 1920s, noted with some satisfaction that his own antisemitism was proverbial in the Circle.[62] Hildebrandt recalls the anti-Jewish tendencies of the "National-Gesonnenen" disciples,[63] arguably an allusion to the subgroups around Wolters in Marburg and Kiel.[64] Wolters's "Blättergeschichte," compiled over a decade and a half and published in 1930, with the Master's explicit approbation, as the official history of the Circle, downplayed the contributions of Jewish disciples (most notably that of Gundolf) and was regarded as antisemitic by many readers.[65]

In view of the growing prominence of Wolters and his adherents as well as George's implicit endorsement of their attitude, it seems no exaggeration to say, then, that in the postwar era the Circle began to embrace an increasingly *völkisch* nationalism. The birth of the new republic in the shadow of defeat and the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Versailles had contributed to a dramatic transformation of the earlier cosmopolitan ideal of a "Roman Germany." The anti-Catholic polemics, the exaltation of the German *Volk* over the "Welschen," the positive reassessment of Prussia, the heightened concern with racial issues — this was *Deutschtum* in a new key. The new nationalism of the "Georgeans," no doubt, still left room for certain favored Others. Next to the shining armor of the German emperors, George invoked the cedar trees of the Orient; next to Baldur he saw Apollo.[66] The tirades of Wolters and Elze against France and Rome were offset by Vallentin's and Gundolf's paeans to Napoleon and Caesar.[67] And despite the more narrowly political attacks on Versailles and Weimar, there remained the larger concerns with the aesthetic regeneration of Europe.[68] The notion of *Deutschtum* in the Circle clearly was not identical with the *Deutschtümelei* of the German Right. But in the 1920s, the boundaries between the two gradually became blurred. As Walter Benjamin remarked in his 1930 review of Max Kommerell's book *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik* (1928), the Secret Germany had become part of the official Germany's ideological arsenal, in which the "Tarnkappe" of the George Circle hung next to the "Stahlhelm" of the neoconservatives and the Nazis.[69]

Can any straightforward trajectories or indeed causal connections be identified between the thought of the George Circle and National Socialism? One of George's most prominent biographers, Robert E. Norton, a contributor to this volume, has recently asserted such a link. According to Norton, "George and his circle significantly contributed to the creation of a psychological, cultural, and even political climate that made the events in Germany leading up to and following 1933 not just imaginable but also feasible."[70] George's defenders, by contrast, have portrayed him either as an apolitical intellectual committed solely to the sphere of aesthetics or as the proponent of a deeply humanistic ethos and a cosmopolitan — or, at any rate, European — conception of *Deutschtum* that was profoundly at odds with the ideologies of the German Right.[71] The present volume aims to move beyond these dichotomous interpretations of George and his Circle. In addition to asking what political effects the George Circle produced, the individual contributors explore the various ways in which its members conceived of their self-imposed cultural tasks in political terms. The underlying assumption of nearly all the chapters in this volume is that the very structure of the Circle, its notion of "das schöne Leben," its "nationalpädagogische Mission," and its program of cultural renewal had political dimensions. Obviously, these structures, ideas, and programs were neither static nor monolithic. They changed over time and they were renegotiated and redefined by the different subgroups of the Circle (often associated with their different locations: Heidelberg, Berlin, and Munich) and the three different generations of disciples that made up the highly heterogeneous collective known as the George Kreis. It is equally important, in this context, to stress that George and his associates never formulated a coherent ideology or *Weltbild*, let alone published a pamphlet containing the "official" doctrine of George's "staat."[72] For all of these reasons, any reference to "culture and politics in the George Circle" in the singular can be only a form of intellectual shorthand. Our title should be read rather as exploring the changing conceptions of the relation between culture and politics, and indeed of the cultural politics, in a — capaciously understood — circle of intellectuals and artists.

What the contributions to this volume show is that George's aesthetic and cultural ideas cannot easily be separated from his political aims. At the same time, they also suggest that the realm of politics, in the eyes of George and his followers, was always subordinate to the realm of *Geist*, *Leben*, and *Kunst*. There can be little doubt that for him, as for Nietzsche, "the political" was always a means to an end, never an end in itself. The ultimate end of politics, according to George, was the creation of a new social order that would allow a comprehensive regeneration of culture and a fundamental reform of life. This question — how socio-political change could aid cultural change — became central to the George Circle, especially in the wake of the First World War. As the following chapters dem-

onstrate, it was a question that was endlessly debated — neither the Master nor his disciples ever arrived at a conclusive answer. What the contributions to this volume illustrate — and where they move beyond most of the existing critical literature that tends to separate the two spheres — are the intricate, complex, and changing links between culture and politics in the Circle, from its foundation in the early 1900s through its dissolution after 1933.

Part 1 surveys aspects of the Circle's membership and nature, beginning with Ute Oelmann's overview of its evolution from a society of artists, a *Künstlergesellschaft*, to a living community, a *Lebensgemeinschaft*. Oelmann argues that the early, more narrowly poetic preoccupations of George and his followers, manifest in their founding of the *Blätter für die Kunst*, were transformed over time into a new cultural agenda whose significance was existential rather than merely literary.[73] The ever-shifting subtle dynamics among the Circle's members included a constant jockeying for George's attention and approval, central to which was the intense homoerotic engagement of the poet with a succession (often overlapping) of young men. Adam Bisno considers the formative expression of this homoeroticism in the early relationship and sudden break between George and fellow poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal, an episode that Thomas Karlauf has described as the most consequential event in George's life.[74] George subsequently replaced Hofmannsthal with a series of younger disciples he could simultaneously adore and be adored by, thus reenacting the role of Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*, who was both pursuer of the young Alcibiades and eventually pursued by him. The first and most celebrated of these erotic figures was Maximilian Kronberger, whose early death allowed George to transform him into the object of a cult into which later Circle members were conscripted. "Maximin," as George baptized the posthumously deified Kronberger, was thus exalted above the intense competition for George's attention and approval in which the younger members of the Circle engaged. Reflection on the Circle's membership is rounded out by Robert E. Lerner's exploration of the complex and problematic role of women in its midst, focused on the dramatic life of Gertrud Kantorowicz.

Part 2 concentrates on the politics of George's poetry, his conception of poetry and culture as well as that of his long-time disciple Friedrich Gundolf, in the context of Weimar, Nazi, and post-1945 Germany. Rüdiger Görner explores Gundolf's reading of Rilke, George's great rival for the mantle of *poeta vates* in the German language up until Rilke's death in 1926. The break that same year between Gundolf and George deeply affected Gundolf's assessment of Rilke's poetry in comparison to George's, which is highlighted in Gundolf's 1931 lectures on Rilke, delivered shortly before his own death. The relation between George and Rilke is placed in the context of their political bearings in Ray Ockenden's essay, while David

Midgley explores the reception of George's poetry among the various intellectual and cultural milieus of the Weimar Republic. Midgley traces in detail the fluctuations of George's reputation in the 1920s, identifying a break around 1928 when, despite homage paid on the occasion of the poet's sixtieth birthday, a new poetics associated in particular with Bertolt Brecht was making the romantic idealism and "aesthetic fundamentalism" (Stefan Breuer) of George look increasingly anachronistic.[75]

The George Circle, however, attracted not only poets, but also scholars — and many who, like Gundolf and Wolters, pursued both vocations. Yet the role and nature of scholarship in its incarnation as *Wissenschaft* was deeply problematic for the members of the Circle. The critique of *Wissenschaft* as dry, arid, and positivist was one to which George subscribed, especially after his break with Gundolf, who had, much to the surprise of his friends and followers in the Circle, completed his habilitation in 1911 and become a popular and dedicated professor at Heidelberg University. Gundolf's sojourn in Heidelberg, first for his habilitation and, from 1916, as professor of German literature, brought George also into the ambit of Max Weber and Georg Simmel, two influential scholars who in these same years were engaged in rethinking the meaning and purpose of *Sozialwissenschaft*. Weber in particular was a strong advocate of dispassionate scholarship, accepting that scholars cannot but acknowledge the value-dimensions of what they study, yet insisting, at the same time, on a clear distinction between speaking as a scholar and engaging in political activism.[76] Yet, for Gundolf, Weber's conception of science contributed to the *Entzauberung* of the world,[77] which led him and other members of the Circle to articulate a vision of *Wissenschaft* that would be consonant with myth and passion rather than destructive of them.

Part 3 explores these contested engagements with *Wissenschaft* — along with the Circle's idea's regarding *Herrschaft* — in three essays. Melissa Lane's focus is on the extensive scholarly writings by members of the Circle on Plato's philosophy, a topic second to none in terms of their publication record: George's disciples published twenty-six books dealing with Plato, alongside pamphlets, speeches, articles, and so forth.[78] Lane argues that Plato became a crucial figure for the Circle earlier than is widely thought, mainly because of his unique status as a model who was at once poet, philosopher, and political founder. Their studies of Plato blurred the lines between scholarship and mythic vision, thought and action, illustrating the Circle's appeal to the unifying and living *Gestalt* in attempts to give new meaning and value to *Wissenschaft*. The topic of *Wissenschaft* in the Circle is taken up from another angle by Bertram Schefold, who examines the underappreciated set of political economists with Circle affiliations, most notably Edgar Salin and Arthur Salz. Schefold shows how creative and unorthodox their thought became as a result of their contact with George. Martin A. Ruehl addresses the case of Ernst

Kantorowicz, whose Jewish birth marked him out for proscription and exile, yet whose political and scholarly views in many respects chimed with the notions of *Herrschaft* and *Deutschtum* propagated by the Nazis.

Finally, while anticipated at several previous junctures in the volume, the political import of the Circle is the special focus of part 4. Richard Faber sets the scene with an investigation of George's understanding of Germany's relation to Italy and Rome, as well as his conception of *Reich*. Robert E. Norton — whose intellectual biography of George highlights his increasingly conscious commitment to a political transformation of Germany to match his elitist and authoritarian politics of friendship — traces that trajectory back to Hofmannsthal's view of the political efficacy of poetry and George's particular appropriation of that view.[79] The question of the Circle's bearing on the formulation of Nazi ideas, or ideas that were akin to and supportive of theirs, and the question of the participation of members of the Circle in the Nazi party and/or regime, are taken up by the two final essays of the volume. Peter Hoffmann argues for a general affinity between many members of the Circle (with the notable exception of Robert Boehringer) and the Nazi regime, and repudiating apologetic or distancing remarks by Circle members after the fact. In contrast, Thomas Karlauf takes as representative of the Circle's political import not the majority of its members but the destiny of one of them: Claus von Stauffenberg, who played a central role in the "bomb plot" of 20 July 1944. That contrast between the many and the one in the debate over the political significance of the Circle is a fittingly ambivalent echo of the Circle's own elitism in both culture and politics.

Notes

[1] See Roman Köster, Werner Plumpe, Bertram Schefold, and Korinna Schönhärl, eds., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens und die Wirklichkeit der Weimarer Republik: Vorstellungen von Staat und Gemeinschaft im George-Kreis* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2009).

[2] "Das geheime Deutschland" was an in-house term used by members of the George Circle to refer both to themselves and to the "Dichter und Helden" of the past whom they venerated, e.g., Hölderlin and the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II: see Eckhart Grünewald, *Ernst Kantorowicz und Stefan George. Beiträge zur Biographie des Historikers bis zum Jahre 1938 und zu seinem Jugendwerk Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1982), 74–80. The term goes back to a 1910 essay by Karl Wolfskehl, one of George's original associates, who described George's poetry as the manifestation of a different, "geheimes Deutschland," distinct from the "offizielles Deutschland" that was the Wilhelmine Empire: Karl Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst und die neuste Literatur," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung*, vol. 1 (1910): 1–18; here, 14–15. Norbert von

Hellingrath, like Wolfskehl an early associate of George's, invoked the concept in his 1915 lecture on "Hölderlin und die Deutschen": "Ich nenne uns 'Volk Hölderlins,' weil es zutiefst im deutschen Wesen liegt, daß sein innerster Glutkern unendlich weit unter der Schlackenkruste, die seine Oberfläche ist, nur in einem *geheimen* Deutschland zutage tritt." Norbert von Hellingrath, "Hölderlin und die Deutschen," in Norbert von Hellingrath, *Hölderlin-Vermächtnis. Forschungen und Vorträge. Ein Gedankenbuch zum 14. Dezember 1936* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1936), 123–53; here, 124–25. George himself used the term "Geheimes Deutschland" as the title for one of the poems he composed in the early 1920s (published in the 1928 collection *Das Neue Reich*), whose final stanza reads:

> Nur was im schützenden schlaf
> Wo noch kein taster es spürt
> Lang in tiefinnerstem schacht
> Weihlicher erde noch ruht —
> Wunder undeutbar für heut
> Geschick wird des kommenden tages.

Stefan George, "Geheimes Deutschland," in Stefan George, *Gesamt-Ausgabe der Werke*, vol. 9, *Das Neue Reich* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1928), 59–65; here, 65.

[3] Kurt Singer to Martin Buber, 5 February 1916: see Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten: 1897–1965*, 3 vols., ed. Grete Schaeder (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1972–75), vol. 1, 416–17. See also Michael Landmann, *Figuren um Stefan George*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam and Bonn: Castrum-Peregrini-Presse, 1988), 62.

[4] See Walter Benjamin, "Über Stefan George" [1928], in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pt. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 622–23:

> Im Bewußtsein, daß ein solcher Versuch nie und nimmer gelingen könnte, bemühe ich mich, desto genauer mir zu vergegenwärtigen, wie George in mein Leben hineinwirkte. Voranzuschicken ist dies: Er tat es niemals in seiner Person. Wohl habe ich ihn gesehen. . . . Stunden waren mir nicht zu viel, . . . lesend, auf einer Bank, den Augenblick zu erwarten, da er vorbeikommen sollte. . . . Doch das war alles zu einer Zeit, da die entscheidende Erschütterung seines Werkes mich längst erreicht hatte.

[5] See Stefan George, *Tage und Taten. Aufzeichnungen und Skizzen* [1933] (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1967) 55: "Deshalb o dichter nennen dich genossen und jünger so gerne meister weil du am wenigsten nachgeahmt werden kannst und doch so grosses über sie vermochtest."

[6] See Wolfgang Braungart, "Walter Benjamin, Stefan George und die Frühgeschichte des Begriffs der Aura. Anmerkungen mit Blick auf die Geschichte des fotografischen Portraits," *Castrum Peregrini* 230 (1997): 38–51; here, 38; and Günter Heintz, "Der Zeuge: Walter Benjamin," in Günter Heintz, *Stefan George: Studien zu seiner künstlerischen Wirkung* (Stuttgart: Hauswedell, 1986), 310–45; here, 340.

[7] Stefan George, *Sämtliche Werke*, 18 vols., ed. Georg Peter Landmann and Ute Oelmann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981ff.), vol. 8 (= *Der Stern des Bundes*), 84. The complete poem reads:

> Wer je die flamme umschritt
> Bleibe der flamme trabant!
> Wie er auch wandert und kreist:
> Wo noch ihr schein ihn erreicht
> Irrt er zu weit nie vom ziel.
> Nur wenn sein blick sie verlor
> Eigener schimmer ihn trügt:
> Fehlt ihm der mitte gesetz
> Treibt er zerstiebend ins all.

For the popularity of the first two lines in the *Wandervogel* and the Hitler Youth, see, e.g., Heinz Schreckenberg, *Erziehung, Lebenswelt und Kriegseinsatz der deutschen Jugend unter Hitler: Anmerkungen zur Literatur* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2000), 195.

[8] Georg Lukács, "Die neue Einsamkeit und ihre Lyrik: Stefan George," in Georg von Lukács, *Die Seele und die Formen: Essays* (Berlin: Egon Fleischel, 1911), 176:

> Georges Kälte ist somit: das Nicht-lesen-können des heutigen Lesers . . . Er ist kalt: weil seine Töne so fein sind, daß sie nicht jeder unterscheiden kann; kalt: weil seine Tragödien solcherart sind, daß sie der heutige Durchschnittsmensch noch nicht als tragisch empfindet, und daher glaubt, jene Gedichte seine nur der schönen Reime zuliebe entstanden; kalt: weil die von der gewöhnlichen Lyrik ausgedrückten Gefühle keine Rolle in seinem Leben mehr spielen. Einmal, vielleicht, können trotzdem auch aus diesen Gedichten Volkslieder werden.

[9] See Benjamin, "Über Stefan George," 623: "Wenn es das Vorrecht und das unnehmbare Glück der Jugend ist, in Versen sich legitimieren, streitend und liebend sich auf Verse berufen zu dürfen, so verdankten wir, daß wir dieses erfuhren, den drei Büchern Georges, deren Herzstück das 'Jahr der Seele' ist"; and Walter Benjamin, "Rückblick auf Stefan George," [1933] in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. III, 399: "Das Geschlecht, welchem die reinsten und vollkommensten Gedichte Georges ein Asyl gegeben haben, war zum Tode bestimmt."

[10] Stefan George, "Einzug," in Stefan George, *Gesamt-Ausgabe der Werke. Endgueltige Fassung*, 15 vols. (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1927–34), vol. 6/7 (= *Der Siebente Ring*), 62. The poem powerfully evokes the millennarian mood that characterizes much of George's verse and his palingenetic ideal of renewal through destruction, both of which would have appealed to anarchists like Erich Mühsam and Gustav Landauer who played a prominent role in the so-called Münchner Räterepublik. The full poem runs:

> Voll ist die zeit •
> Weckt was gefeit

Schlief mit dumpfem gegrolle.
Jahrnächte lang
Unsichtbar schlang
Nichtig dursten der scholle:

Grausam geheiss
Tod-nahen schweiss
Ohnmachtschrei der Besessnen •
Hilflose qual
Fluchwürdig mal
Sterbend flehn der Vergessnen.

Boden zerriss
Hülle zerspliss
Same drängte zu sonnen.
Die ihr entfuhrt
Dunkler geburt
Euer reich hat begonnen.

Spreng aus der kluft!
Schrecke die luft
Leuchtender heere geschmetter!
Rachlieder schnaubt
Senget und raubt
Tötet und sichtet • ihr Retter!

Trocknes und meer
Teilet ihr quer
Öden neu zu befelden.
Keimwolken streut
Lenzblüte beut
Sturm und feuer der Helden.

[11] See Manfred Riedel, *Geheimes Deutschland. Stefan George und die Brüder Stauffenberg* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2006), 107.

[12] See Eike Wolgast, *Die Universität Heidelberg, 1386–1986* (Berlin, Heidelberg, and New York: Springer Verlag, 1986), 139–40.

[13] On Gundolf's conception of biography, and indeed of historiography, see Ulrich Raulff, "Der Bildungshistoriker Friedrich Gundolf," in Friedrich Gundolf, *Anfänge deutscher Geschichtsschreibung von Tschudi bis Winckelmann*, ed. Edgar Wind (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1992), 115–54.

[14] That George left a deep mark on Simmel is already evident in Georg Simmel, "Stefan George: Eine kunstphilosophische Betrachtung," *Die Zukunft* 6 (1898): 386–96. On Simmel and George, see Stefan Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus. Stefan George und der deutsche Antimodernismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 169–83; Günther Freymuth, "Georg Simmel und Stefan

George," *Neue deutsche Hefte* 17, 3 (1970): 41–50; Carola Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung. Das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890–1933* (Cologne: Böhlau 1997), 160–82; and Michael Landmann, "Georg Simmel und Stefan George," in *Georg Simmel und die Moderne. Neue Interpretationen und Materialien*, ed. Heinz-Jürgen Dahme and Otthein Rammstedt (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 147–73. Gadamer acknowledges his debts to George in Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Stefan George (1868–1933)," in *Die Wirkung Stefan Georges auf die Wissenschaft: Ein Symposium*, ed. Hans-Joachim Zimmermann (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1985), 43–47. See also Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Verse and the Whole," in *Gadamer on Education, Poetry, and History: Applied Hermeneutics*, ed. Dieter Misgeld and Graeme Nicholson (Albany: State U of New York P, 1991), 83–92; and Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Under the Shadow of Nihilism," in Misgeld and Nicholson, *Gadamer on Education*, 111, where he calls George "the most significant artist in the German tongue in the last hundred years." On Gadamer and George, see, e.g., Robert R. Sullivan, *Political Hermeneutics: The Early Thinking of Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1989), 27, 48.

[15] See Karl Jaspers, *Notizen zu Martin Heidegger* (Munich: Piper, 1978), 93–94, 118–19. Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003), 219–20, points out that Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin and Nietzsche was also conditioned by the George Circle.

[16] See, e.g., Uvo Hölscher, "Strömungen der deutschen Graezistik in den wanziger Jahren," in *Altertumswissenschaft in den 20er Jahren: Neue Fragen und Impulse*, ed. Hellmut Flashar (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 65–85.

[17] Heinrich Rickert had drawn Weber's attention to George as early as 1897, but it was only after Weber's nervous breakdown in 1898 that he began to appreciate George's poetry — as Marianne Weber remarked: "Die das Fühlen immer neu vertiefenden künstlerischen Gebilde [i.e., George's verse] fanden jetzt Eingang" — though he continued to stress his distance to the emotions expressed in it. See Marianne Weber, *Max Weber. Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1926), 463. Even before his first meeting with George in 1910 in Heidelberg, which had been arranged by Friedrich Gundolf, Weber had voiced his doubts about the Circle's mysticism and George's promise of quasi-religious redemption:

> Dazu führt der Weg entweder durch die ekstatische Entrückung, oder aber durch die kontemplative Mystik. Den ersteren hat, wie mir scheint, die Georgeschule und George selbst gewählt, weil nur er die Anwendung der ihm eigenen, Dantesken Ausdrucksmittel gestattet. Aber dieser Weg führt nun — das ist sein Verhängnis — nie zu einem mystischen Erlebnis, . . . sondern stets nur zum orgiastischen Dröhnen einer Stimme, die dann als ewige Stimme erscheint, nie mit anderen Worten, zu *Inhalten*, sondern nur zu einem leidenschaftlichen Harfengetön. *Ein* Versprechen eines ungeheuren, Erlösung garantierenden Erlebnisses, wird durch ein anderes, noch größeres überboten, immer werden neue Wechsel auf das, was kommen soll, gezogen, obwohl die Uneinlöslichkeit offen zutage

> liegt. Und da es über dies rein formale Prophetentum hinaus, schließlich keine Steigerung mehr gibt, ist der Dichter auf der beständigen Suche nach dem postulierten Inhalt seiner Prophezeiungen begriffen, ohne ihn jemals erhaschen zu können. (466–67)

[18] See Wolf Lepenies, *Die drei Kulturen: Soziologie zwischen Literatur und Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2002), 342: "Dennoch beeindruckten ihn [Max Weber] der Ernst und die Lauterkeit, mit welcher George und seine Anhänger ihre Mission verfolgten. [. . .] Marianne Weber charakterisierte die Debatten mit George als warm, mitfühlend, von Verständnis füreinander geprägt trotz aller Differenzen. [. . .] Weber las noch 1917 . . . in Oerlinghausen aus Georges Gedichten und aus Gundolfs Goethe-Buch vor." See also Folker Reichert, *Gelehrtes Leben: Karl Hampe, das Mittelalter und die Geschichte der Deutschen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 175: "Vielmehr begegneten sich George und Weber mit wechselseitigem Respekt, und zeitweilig gaben die Kontakte zum George-Kreis dem Kreis um Max Weber das Gepräge."

[19] Thomas Karlauf, *Stefan George: Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Blessing, 2007), 414–50. In his intellectual biography of Max Weber, Joachim Radkau argues, similarly, that George — rather than, say, Gladstone — served as Weber's model of the charismatic leader. See Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber: A Biography* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), xv, 295, 394. On Weber and George, see also the perceptive comments in Lepenies, *Die drei Kulturen*, 311–57.

[20] George revelead his dislike of Mann on various occasions: see, e.g., his letter to Ernst Glöckner of June 1921, in which he urged the recipient to break off all contact with Mann, "einem gemeinen und gefährlichen kerl [*sic*]." S. George to E. Glöckner, 12 June 1921, Stefan-George-Archiv. On George and Mann, see Hans Albert Maier, *Stefan George und Thomas Mann: Zwei Formen des dritten Humanismus in kritischem Vergleich* (Zurich: Speer-Verlag, 1947); Friedhelm Marx, "Der Heilige Stefan? Thomas Mann und Stefan George," *George-Jahrbuch* 6 (2006/07): 80–99; and Robert Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and his Circle* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2002), 621–22.

[21] Thomas Mann, *Tagebücher 1918 bis 1921*, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1979), 249.

[22] Benjamin, "Über Stefan George," 624.

[23] See Frank Schirrmacher, "Dies ist der Pfeil des Meisters: Der Staat des Dichters Stefan George, der Verrat und der ästhetische Fundamentalismus. Aus Anlaß der Studie von Stefan Breuer," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 265 (14 November 1995), L1.

[24] See Lepenies, *Die drei Kulturen*, 328–29: "Eindrucksvoll waren Zahl und Namen der George-Schüler, die geisteswissenschaftliche Professuren an deutschen Hochschulen erhielten: dabei unterstützt von Kulturpolitikern wie C. H. Becker, der Gundolf 1920, wenn auch vergeblich, nach Berlin holen wollte, der sich für die Berliner Berufung Kurt Hildebrandts einsetzte und Friedrich Wolters gern als Mitarbeiter in seinem Ministerium gesehen hätte."

[25] Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister — Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: C. H. Beck 2009), 356–57:

> Um 1960 gab es so gut wie keine bedeutende kulturpolitische Einrichtung in der Bundesrepublik, die Becker nicht beraten, keinen kulturpolitisch wichtigen Beirat, dem er nicht angehört hätte; das reichte vom Frankfurter Institut für Sozialforschung, dessen Direktoren Adorno und Horkheimer er sich eng verbunden fühlte, über den Beirat des Münchener Instituts für Zeitgeschichte und den Beirat für innere Führung der Bundeswehr bis zum Kulturbeirat des Auswärtigen Amtes. Becker nutzte diese Gremien und die sich daraus ergebenden Kontakte im Sinn einer Politik durch Netzwerke: eine Struktur der Feinsteuerung, unsichtbar und machtvoll. Intuitiv wusste der Sohn des Ministers, dass sich in solchen Netzen oder Beziehungssystemen so etwas wie das eigentliche Leben der Gesellschaften abspielte." That George's pedagogical ideals inspired Becker is evidenced in Hellmut Becker, "'Die art wie ihr bewahrt ist ganz verfall': Stefan George und die Bildung" (*Castrum Peregrini* 184–85 [1985]: 67–75).

[26] Drawing on Plato, George and his followers believed in the inextricable union of *eros* and *paideia*. According to Thomas Karlauf, "pädagogischer Eros" constituted the structuring principle of the George Circle: see, e.g., Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 403–4.

[27] See, e.g., Matthias Bartsch et al., "Familienbande," *Der Spiegel* 13 (2010): 34–38; and Micha Brumlik, "Von Athen in den Odenwald," *Die Tageszeitung* (15 March 2010). Because of the strong homoerotic dimension of George's pedagogical ideas, he was repeatedly associated last year with the sex abuse scandal at the Odenwaldschule. On 5 April 2010, the headline of an interview in the arts section of Germany's leading highbrow daily read: "Der Übervater der Reformpädagogik: Päderastie aus dem Geist Stefan Georges?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (5 April 2010). For a spirited defence against these charges, see Christophe Fricker, "Stefan George war anders," *Die Welt* (3 April 2010).

[28] See Gottfried Benn, *Briefe an einen Verleger. Max Niedermayer zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. M. V. Schlüter (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1965), 45, where the label "Ausstrahlungsphänomen" is attached to Nietzsche. Benn's deep admiration for George and his appreciation of George's far-reaching impact on German culture are evident in his notorious (if undelivered) "Rede auf Stefan George" of 1934, in which he remarks that George's "Wille zur Form," his "ästhetische[r] Wille . . ., der im Kunstwerk eine Welt aufrichtet und eine überwindet" was "ungeheuer allgemein, produktiv und pädagogisch": Gottfried Benn, "Rede auf Stefan George" [1934], in Gottfried Benn, *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgarter Ausgabe), ed. Gerhard Schuster (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986–2003), vol. 4 (*Prosa 2*), 109.

[29] For George's praise of Italy in these early collections, see Elisabeth Gundolf, "Stefan George und der Nationalsozialismus," in *Stefan George: Zwei Vorträge* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1965), 52–76, especially 60–3; Bernhard Böschenstein, Stefan George und Italien," *Jahrbuch des freien deutschen Hochstifts*

(1986): 317–33; and Emmy Rosenfeld, *L'Italia nella poesia di Stefan George* (Milan: Malfasi, 1948).

[30] See Walter Bussmann, *Treitschke: Sein Welt- und Geschichtsbild*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt, 1981).

[31] In the eyes of nineteenth-century German nationalists, Hermann's victory over the Roman military commander Varus in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (AD 9) prevented the "Latinization" of Central Europe and marked the beginning of German history.

[32] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1927), 77. In his radio lecture "Deutsches Papsttum" (written 1933, broadcast 1935), Kantorowicz again invoked Bamberg as a symbol of a classically restrained, "apollonisch" Germany: E. Kantorowicz, "Deutsches Papsttum," *Castrum Peregrini* 7 (1953): 7–24; here, 9. Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, who entered the Circle in May 1923, apparently bore a close physical resemblance to the statue in Bamberg and the members of the Circle would jokingly refer to him as "der Bamberger Reiter": see Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *Secret Germany: Claus von Stauffenberg and the Mystical Crusade against Hitler* (London: J. Cape, 1994), 119. The Circle also associated the Stauffenberg brothers with the Hohenstaufen dynasty of the Middle Ages. See Peter Hoffmann, *Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg und seine Brüder* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1992), 52 and 61.

[33] Stefan Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus: Stefan George und der deutsche Antimodernismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 73–77, notes that George, unlike most of his disciples, condemned the First World War from the start and saw nothing regenerative or redemptive in it. This is confirmed by Edgar Salin, *Um Stefan George: Erinnerung und Zeugnis*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1954), 260; see also Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst: Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1930), 439–40.

[34] Edgar Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 143–4: "die Verfemung des deutschen Volkes schon während des Krieges und verstärkt im Gefolge von Versailles [musste] besonders niederdrückend und unerträglich im Freundeskreis empfunden werden . . . stärker als irgendwann vorher . . . wies daher der Weg der Ehre in den Jahren von 1919–1932 für die Dichter-Freunde und für das deutsche Volk in naheverwandte Richtung."

[35] See Friedrich Wolters, *Vier Reden über das Vaterland* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1927); Friedrich Wolters and Walter Elze, *Stimmen des Rheins: ein Lesebuch für die Deutschen* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1923); and Friedrich Wolters, *Die Bedingungen des Versailler Vertrags und ihre Begründung* (Kiel: Max Tandler, 1929). Wolters's politics and his increasingly dominant position in the Circle are discussed by Carola Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung: Das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890–1933* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997), 213–89. See also Claude David, *Stefan George: Son œuvre poétique* (Lyons: IAC, 1952), 361–63; and Martin A. Siemoneit, *Politische Interpretationen von Stefan Georges Dichtung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1978), 23–40.

[36] For George's critical remarks about Wolters's participation at a Schlageter celebration, see Berthold Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George 1902–1931* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1967), 72.

[37] Michael Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer? Zur Wirkung Stefan Georges im "Dritten Reich"* (Marburg: Tectum, 1995), 1, as well as Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 145–46, contend that Wolters's opinions did not reflect George's. But Vallentin reports that in April 1931, George expressed his admiration for Wolters's development in the 1920s, and Kurt Hildebrandt recalls that George and Wolters were united in their nationalist attitude since the breakdown of 1918. See Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 136; Kurt Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1965), 119n15. See also David, *Stefan George*, 362. George's amendments to Wolters's history of the Circle, the so-called "Blättergeschichte," reveal that the Master often took an even more extreme position than Wolters. See Friedrich Wolters, "Frühe Aufzeichnungen nach Gesprächen mit Stefan George zur 'Blättergeschichte,'" ed. M. Philipp, *Castrum Peregrini* 225 (1996): 5–62; here, 12. Philipp's juxtaposition of Wolters's early 1913 manuscript with the 1930 final version of the "Blättergeschichte" impressively demonstrates the increasing nationalization of the Circle after the First World War. See Philipp, *Castrum Peregrini,* 15–16.

[38] Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 264. For George's political aspirations during and after the First World War, see Volker Dürr, "Stefan George und Gottfried Benn im europäischen Kontext: Politische Aspekte der ästhetizistischen Tradition," in *Das Stefan-George-Seminar 1978 in Bingen am Rhein*, ed. Peter Lutz Lehmann and Robert Wolf (Bingen: Lothar Stiehm, 1979), 48–59, especially 56–57.

[39] *GA*, 9:33, 38, 39, 114: ". . . dass einst/Des erdteils herz die welt erretten soll." See Wolters, *Stefan George*, 440–43.

[40] See David, *Stefan George*, 362. George was born in Büdesheim near Mainz, spent much of his childhood and youth in Bingen, and later frequently stayed in Heidelberg.

[41] Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 262: "Diese Franzosen müssen ausgerottet werden." To Edith Landmann he remarked in 1926: "Wenn einer einmal die Franzosen so sähe, wie ich sie sehe, dann ging's ihnen schlecht." When Landmann reminded him of his earlier Francophilia, George replied: "Das war damals. Heut, nachdem sie [the French] sich so betragen haben, müssen sie's zurückkriegen": Edith Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Kupper vormals Georg Bondi, 1963), 150; also 89, 92, 95, 193. See also Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George*, 166–67; and Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 138. In an unpublished poem of 1927/8, George bewailed the predicament of the German *Volk*, surrounded by envious neighbours eager "uns ein weitres stuck / Auszuhaun aus unsrem fleisch": quoted in Klaus Landfried, *Stefan George: Politik des Unpolitischen* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1975), 241.

[42] For George's changed view of Italy, see Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 87; and E. Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 98, 107. Percy Gothein relates how George spoke out strongly against a *Bildungsreise* to Italy which Gothein wanted to

undertake after the war: Percy Gothein, "Letzte Universitätsjahre/Der Tod des Vaters: Aus einem Erinnerungsbuch," *Castrum Peregrini* 26 (1956): 7–32; here, 18.

[43] E. Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 178, 182. For George's anti-Catholicism, see also 100, 108, 196. George seems to have particularly relished the antipapal passages of Kantorowicz's *Kaiser Friedrich*. See Landmann, *Gespräche*, 166.

[44] Hildebrandt, citing George: "Ein schlechter Kaiser ist besser als gar kein Kaiser!" For George's changed view of Prussianness, see his statement: "Von einem Haß gegen Preußentum und Bismarck ist seit dem ersten Weltkriege nichts zu spüren: wesentlich ist der Wille zum nationalen Halt. . . . Ablehnung der Erfüllungspolitik, ja selbst Bereitschaft zum Kriege." *Erinnerungen an Stefan George*, 228.

[45] Kurt Hildebrandt, *Norm und Entartung des Menschen* (Dresden: Sibyllen-Verlag, 1920). The book was published without the signet of the Circle — but with the explicit approval of George and Wolters. See Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George*, 113–14n9. That Hildebrandt was not the only proponent of eugenic ideas in the Circle is evidenced by the programmatic "Einleitung" to the *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 3 (1912): iii–viii; here, v, where Wolters and Gundolf condemn the state's protection of "die Schwachen, die Krüppel" and call for pro-active measures against "Artverschlechterung." These passages were reprinted, with George's assent, in Wolters, *Stefan George*, 437.

[46] See Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 248; and Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George*, 115, 124n20.

[47] This is confirmed by Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 248.

[48] Wolters, "Der Rhein unser Schicksal," in *Vier Reden*, 139.

[49] Wolters, *Stefan George*, 440.

[50] He was disappointed, however, by Austria's failure to "Germanize" Bohemia and complained: "Heute würde nun an allen Enden versucht, vom Deutschtum abzubröckeln. Von überall kröchen die fremden Völker hinein": Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 64, citing George (8 February, 1922).

[51] *GA*, 9:33. See Landfried, *Stefan George*, 219–21.

[52] "Nur wenn die gelben Affen kommen," George remarked to Karl Wolfskehl during the First World War, "dann nehme ich selbst die Flinte" (Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 260).

[53] See Ernst Morwitz, *Kommentar zu dem Werk Stefan Georges* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1960), 419.

[54] *GA*, 9:30. This, at least, is Morwitz's interpretation of the word: Morwitz, *Kommentar*, 419–20; but cf. Katherina and Momme Mommsen, "'Ihr kennt Eure Bibel nicht!' Bibel- und Horaz-Anklänge in Stefan Georges Gedicht 'Der Krieg,'" *Castrum Peregrini* 34, no. 170 (1985): 42–69.

[55] See Hans Liebeschütz, "Ernst Kantorowicz and the George Kreis," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 9 (1964): 345–47; here, 346; and Ralph Giesey, "Ernst H. Kantorowicz: Scholarly Triumphs and Academic Travails in Weimar Germany and the United States," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 30 (1985): 191–202; here, 193.

[56] E. Gundolf, "Stefan George und der Nationalsozialismus," 69, calculated that almost half of the thirty-five German contributors to the *Blätter für die Kunst* were

Jewish or of Jewish background. See Yakov Malkiel, "Ernst Kantorowicz," in *On Four Modern Humanists: Hofmannsthal, Gundolf, Curtius, Kantorowicz*, ed. Arthur R. Evans, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970), 178.

[57] Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 244, 249, citing George: "der wirklich von meiner Rasse ist."

[58] Ernst Robert Curtius, *Kritische Essays zur europäischen Literatur*, 2nd ed. (Bern: Francke, 1954), 153: "Menschen. Ich erlaube nie, daß sie in meiner Gesellschaft . . . in der Überzahl sind." In a similar vein, George referred to Vallentin as "der Fremdstämmige" and claimed that Jews lacked "die Seele eines Volkes." They had been chosen by God as "Sündenböcke": E. Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 109, 87, 106. These comments give some clues as to what George might have told Ernst Kantorowicz in their "grossen Auseinandersetzung über den Zionismus" on 6 November 1920, at the end of which Kantorowicz came to adopt the Master's standpoint: Ernst Kantorowicz to J. von Kahler, 6 November 1920: StGA, Akte Ernst Kantorowicz.

[59] Kurt Hildebrandt to Arvid Brodersen, 7 January 1935, quoted in Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Bruder*, 502n53: "Daß die Juden im politischen Staat und im geistigen zersetzend sind, war St. G.'s Lehre schon in der Kriegszeit. . . . Mit der Haltung der Juden war er in zunehmendem Maasse [*sic*] unzufrieden."

[60] These younger members played a more and more central role in the Circle in the mid-1920s. According to Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Bruder*, 76–77, between 1925 and 1930 the *völkisch*-oriented disciples Kommerell and Anton were closest to George, who lost interest during this time in his older Jewish friends. See Groppe, *Macht der Bildung*, 654–57.

[61] See Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Bruder*, 501–2.

[62] Max Kommerell to Johann Anton, 24 December 1930, quoted in Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Bruder*, 493.

[63] Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George*, 120.

[64] These included Max Kommerell, Johann and Wolfgang Anton, Walter Elze, and Rudolf Fahrner. See Groppe, *Macht der Bildung*, 273–76.

[65] Wolters's antisemitism is evident in his ironic reference to the "Idealtypus des Ullstein-Deutschen." See Wolters, *Stefan George*, 521. The Jewish Ullstein family owned one of the biggest publishing houses of Europe and ran some of the leading liberal newspapers in Germany before 1933. Ernst Kantorowicz made a similarly acerbic remark about the cosmopolitanism of "Ullstein-Deutschland" in his 1930 speech at Halle. See Ernst Kantorowicz, "Grenzen, Möglichkeiten und Aufgaben der Darstellung mittelalterlicher Geschichte," ed. Eckhart Grünewald, *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* l (1994):104–25; here, 121. Note that George defended the antisemitic contents of Wolters's book against Edith Landmann's objections: "Nein, aber alles, was recht ist: alles kann man von Euch [the Jews] doch auch nicht loben" (E. Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 204).

[66] *GA*, 9:57, 34.

[67] Berthold Vallentin, *Napoleon* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1923); Friedrich Gundolf, *Caesar: Geschichte seines Ruhms* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1924).

[68] After the war, George remarked to Hildebrandt that his only hope was "die europäische Wiedergeburt aus deutschem Geiste": Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George*, 105. See also 125, 164, 165; Landfried, *Stefan George*, 219–21.

[69] See Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Hella Tiedeman-Bartels, vol. 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), 259. Richard Faber believes that the "Stahlhelm" in Benjamin's pilean metaphor was an allusion to the "Freikorpskämpfer Kantorowicz." See Richard Faber, "Walter Benjamins *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* und Ernst H. Kantorowicz' *Die zwei Körper des Königs*. Ein Vergleich," in *Geschichtskörper: Zur Aktualität von Ernst H. Kantorowicz*, ed. Wolfgang Ernst and Cornelia Vismann (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1998), 71–86, especially 73.

[70] Norton, *Secret Germany*, xvi.

[71] See, e.g., Salin, *Um Stefan George*, and Landfried, *Stefan George*. One of the standard works on the history of German literature, the *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte*, describes George as an unpolitical poet. See Wolfgang Beutin, ed., *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 6th ed. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2001), 328.

[72] It was Friedrich Wolters who first used the label "staat" to describe the Circle and its structures, obviously alluding to Plato's *Republic* which in the German translation is called *Der Staat*: see Norton, *Secret Germany*, 349.

[73] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 336.

[74] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 27, similarly observes that the seventh volume of the Blätter in 1904 was a turning point in this development, with the earlier volumes calling for the renewal of art in Germany and later ones for the formation of the Circle as a group around George as its lodestar.

[75] See Breuer, Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus, especially 1–9.

[76] See Max Weber's famous speech on "The Profession and Vocation of Politics," in Max Weber, *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 309–69. Weber's concept of charisma was formulated with George's impact on his followers as an example: "Die von künstlerischen Weltgefühlen getragenen Sekten gehören in soziologischer Hinsicht oft zu dem Interessantesten, was es geben kann; sie haben noch heute, ganz wie eine religiöse Sekte, ihre Inkarnation des Göttlichen gehabt — ich erinnere an die Sekte Stefan Georges . . .," quoted in Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 410, from Weber's "Rede auf dem ersten Deutschen Soziologentage in Frankfurt 1910," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*, ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988), 431–49; here, 443–44.

[77] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 411–12.

[78] Frank Weber, *Die Bedeutung Nietzsches für Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1989), 203.

[79] It is striking that Hofmannsthal plays a crucial role for both Norton and Karlauf in their otherwise divergent understandings of the Circle's political ambitions.

I: Members and Mores

1: The George Circle: From *Künstlergesellschaft* to *Lebensgemeinschaft*

Ute Oelmann

In November 1903, an announcement on the front page of the *Verzeichnis der Erscheinungen der Blätter für die Kunst*, printed in bicolor on beige laid paper, introduced readers to a "Gesellschaft der Blätter für die Kunst."[1] In fact, this "Gesellschaft" had already been in existence for almost twelve years. It was introduced here retrospectively, in order to correct a certain image it had recently acquired in the public eye. The "Gesellschaft der Blätter für die Kunst," the authors of the announcement stressed, was a loose association "künstlerischer und ästhetischer menschen" rather than a secret society ("geheime[r] bund"), as the public seemed to believe. It was not held together by statutes or laws; its "Mitglieder," as they were termed elsewhere,[2] had been nominated or had joined by natural affiliation. They were all firmly opposed to the Naturalist movement in German literature and saw themselves as the spearhead of a cultural-intellectual counter-revolution aimed at a new form of art and spirituality (*Geistigkeit*).

The announcement of the *Gesellschaft* in the *Blätter für die Kunst* of 1903, as will be argued below, is a document that captures a crucial moment of transition in the history of the George Circle. What began as a mere union (*Zusammenschluß*) of artists with limited goals turned into a tightly knit circle, a movement (*Bewegung*) that soon developed into an esoteric "Kult- und Lebensgemeinschaft," and, finally, a "staat." The label *George-Kreis* denotes all of those formations. The goal of my essay is to trace the Circle's changing forms and functions, the shifting constellations and affiliations of its coterie of friends, and to locate these transformations within the context of fin-de-siècle German culture — in particular, the *Lebensreform* movement. In order to document these changes and to elucidate their signifance, I shall be looking mainly at the "Einleitungen" and the so-called "Merksprüche" from the *Blätter für die Kunst*, alongside several of Stefan George's poems.

Although the announcement in the 1903 edition of the *Blätter* listed Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Ludwig von Hofmann, Reinhold

Lepsius and Melchior Lechter as coequal members, George was the undisputed originator and leader of the group that was beginning to form. Born in 1868 in Büdesheim, near Bingen, George was the eldest son of a Catholic, middle-class rural family, which had descended from both sides of the river Rhine. Long before he came into contact with Mallarmé and his *cercle,* "Étienne" George had already envisioned a community of artists while attending *Gymnasium* in Darmstadt.[3] This community was to hold regular meetings and tea parties, at which individual members would read from their works, and eventually publish a kind of periodical. While the idea itself may not seem entirely unusual, coming from a precocious adolescent *Gymnasiast*, the tenacity with which young George pursued it and his relentless claim to leadership call for comment. They were prompted, perhaps, by his marginal position as a Catholic and his lack of social status. George's first circle flourished for a while, but quickly collapsed after he took his *Abitur* in 1888, mainly because its members were separated and became increasingly estranged. His plan to reunite his former associates at an international "congress" in Bingen met with little resonance.[4]

The dissolution of this first "Dichterkreis," as well as his experiences between 1888 to 1892 in Paris, London, Vienna, and Brussels, where he made contact with new intellectual movements and formations, strengthened George's resolve to establish a new *Künstlergesellschaft* of his own. His dramatic encounter with Hofmannsthal constituted a first — abortive — attempt to create such an association of artists based on friendship, a "Freundschaftsbund." His "Anruf" of 1892 provides some clues as to what kind of artists George had in mind for his *Künstlergesellschaft* and what purpose the latter was to serve. The "Anruf" was addressed to opponents of Naturalism all over Europe, but in particular to the German-speaking ones, who suffered from greater isolation and marginalization at the turn of the century than their counterparts abroad. Poets, painters, composers, and, more generally, aesthetically minded or "schönheitsliebende" men were to set up a periodical — what would soon become the *Blätter für die Kunst* — for the publication of their writing and its distribution among a larger audience. The introduction to the first slim edition of the *Blätter*, whose editor, Carl August Klein, was even more obscure than the four poets who proclaimed themselves its core contributors and "Mitglieder," read: "Wenn wir diese blätter verbreiten so geschieht es um zerstreute noch unbekannte ähnlich-gesinnte zu entdecken und anzuwerben . . . In der kunst glauben wir an eine glänzende Wiedergeburt" (*B*, 1:1).

The initial impact of this appeal was quite limited, particularly in Germany, and in January 1896 George reiterated his program, elaborating on the notion of cultural renewal: "Einfach liegt was wir teils erstrebten teils verewigten: eine kunst frei von jedem dienst: über dem leben nachdem sie das leben durchdrungen hat" (*B*, 3:1). While espous-

ing the classic aestheticist doctrine of *l'art pour l'art* ("eine kunst frei von jedem dienst"), George still implied that art could and should not be remote from life. The relationship between art and life would remain a central — and complicated — theme in the writings of George and his disciples. The contributors to the early volumes of the *Blätter*, though they were eager to redefine the meaning and purpose of art, initially at least failed to consider how this new art could be brought about and how it would affect life (*B*, 3:5). Already a year later, however, one of them declared that the new fusion of art and life was in the process of being realized by a "kleine schaar" who sought to manifest beauty both at the physical and at the intellectual level ("freien hauptes schön durch das leben will"). This was the desired "Umschwung des deutschen wesens bei der Jahrhundertwende" (*B*, 4:1–2).

The new belief in the possibility — and imminence — of such an "Umschwung" had a lot to do with the sacral conception of art that George and his collaborators began to formulate around the turn of the century. George's exhortation in March 1896 to approach art "mit Ernst und heiligkeit" already revealed his conviction that art belonged to the religious sphere (*B*, 3:2). Terms such as "faith," "rebirth," and "conversion," which were frequently employed in the *Blätter*, suggest that George's concept of "heilige Kunst" was religious in a broader sense. Several years later, in the first *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung*, Karl Wolfskehl took this sacralization of art to a new level, declaring that art was the last manifestation of the divine essence in the world; the true artist possessed mysterious, prophetic powers and performed quasi-religious tasks.[5] Wolfskehl's remarks reflect the *Gesellschaft*'s attempts to endow its activities with new meaning; it also marks an important caesura in the development of the Circle. By redefining art as a sacral activity, George and his followers redefined the bonds that held them together as a group. What had hitherto been a mere loose association grew into a circle: the *Gesellschaft* was transformed into a *Kreis*, with a core and a periphery. Concepts such as *Erziehung* and *Dienst*,[6] as well as *Führerschaft* and *höheres leben* became central to the self-understanding as well as the self-fashioning of the Circle, which began to see itself as a small elite with the self-proclaimed task to regenerate *Kultur* and *Geist*: "Wir wissen wohl dass der schönste kreis die grossen geister nicht hervorrufen kann, aber auch dies dass manche ihrer werke nur aus einem kreis heraus möglich werden" (*B*, 4:1–2).

The artists that gathered around George between 1892 and 1898, notably Hofmannsthal, Wolfskehl, Paul Gérardy, Wacław Rolicz-Lieder, and Albert Verwey, generally belonged to his generation; they included composers such as Conrad Ansorge, Karl Hallwachs, and Clemens von Franckenstein, as well as painters such as Fernand Khnopff, Melchior Lechter, Reinhold Lepsius and Ludwig von Hofmann. Around 1896,

another circle of aesthetically minded individuals emerged in Berlin, which consisted mainly of academics and scholars: Max Dessau, Richard Moritz Meyer, Georg Simmel, Kurt Breysig. It also included a number of female intellectuals such as Sabine Lepsius, Gertrud Simmel, Gertrud Kantorowicz and Margarete Susman. The fusion of these two groups marks the beginning of the formation of what became later known as the *George Kreis*, which was never just a single circle but consisted of various subcircles. To some extent, this Circle overlapped with the Cosmic Circle in Munich, of which George was an associate.

In the fifth volume of the *Blätter*, published in 1910, the Circle outlined the goals of its envisioned cultural revolution as well as the means to achieve them:

> Neuer bildungsgrad (kultur)/ entsteht indem ein oder mehrere urgeister ihren lebensrhythmus offenbaren der zuerst von der gemeinde dann von einer grösseren Volksschicht angenommen wird, der urgeist wirkt nicht durch seine lehre sondern durch seinen rhythmus: die lehre machen die jünger. (*B*, 5:1)

George considered himself such an *Urgeist* or primal spirit, and conceived of the Circle as his *Gemeinde* or congregation — a group of devoted *Jünger* who were to voice, elucidate, and enact his teachings, thus providing *Kultur-Impulse und Lehre* that would affect larger segments of the German nation (*grössere Volksschicht*). These ideas, formulated in 1900, would be put in effect in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

George's doctrines were informed by the profoundly *kulturkritisch* stance he had taken up in the 1890s. Already as a twenty-year-old, he had vociferously denounced the state of contemporary German *Kultur*. Caught up in the deep identity crisis that shook a broad spectrum of the educated middle class at the end of the nineteenth century, George wavered between the desire to quite literally blow up the — in his eyes — moribund civilization of Wilhelmine Germany by planting bombs and the wish to emigrate.[7] His brand of cultural pessimism shared many of the ideals advocated by the *Lebensreform* movement at the turn of the century. The proponents of *Lebensreform*, like the members of the George Circle, overwhelmingly hailed from the *Bildungsbürgertum*, a class whose self-confidence had been undermined towards the end of the nineteenth century by cuts in social services and dwindling employment opportunities for university graduates. This led to increased status anxieties for the academic youth and reinforced their general sense of unease. Materialism, massification, anomie, and the rise of the empirical sciences — "Verstofflichung und Verhirnung," as Karl Wolfskehl called it[8] — prompted the members of this social group to search for a new spiritual aristocracy, a new sense of community, and new charismatic leaders who would channel their thirst for action (*Tat*). Cultural pessimism, which was largely antirational and vitalist

by nature, manifested itself in many different forms in fin-de-siècle Germany: calls for spiritual as well as nutritional reform were voiced alongside demands for physical and social hygiene; religious-esoteric movements sprung up alongside new socialist and nationalist parties; everywhere there were self-appointed preachers, prophets, and saints. After his return from abroad, George came into contact with the various groups that made up the *Lebensreform* movement and their *kulturkritisch* ideals soon began to percolate his Circle.[9]

Kulturkritik, the idea of a comprehensive rejuvenation of life, and the sacralization of art, all contributed to the gestation of the Circle's worldview. The first of George's poems to tackle contemporary cultural issues was composed in the years 1897 through 1899, after the poet had described in an inaugural poem of 1896 how an angel had announced to him the message of "das schöne Leben."[10] This elevated George himself to the status of prophet and priest.[11] He began to be addressed as "Meister," a term that reverberated with religious meaning. Before 1900, the title "Meister" primarily denoted deference and reverence, and it was bestowed upon Melchior Lechter as well as George. George probably imported it from Mallarmé's circle in Paris, but its German usage dates back to the nomenclature of medieval guilds, and it is likely that Lechter in particular would have been inspired by this earlier, artisanal designation. Around 1899, at any rate, the religious meaning of the title was firmly established when the nineteen-year-old Friedrich Gundolf joined the Circle and began to fashion himself explicitly as a disciple ("jünger") of his *Meister* George, reenacting the relationship between Christ and his disciples as well as the customs of esoteric societies such as the Freemasons and Rosicrucians.

These changes within the Circle are evident in the *Merksprüche* of 1904, in particular the section entitled "Der Künstler und die Zeit," where the claim is made "dass jeder befruchtende jeder befreiende gedanke aus geheimkreisen (zenakeln) hervorkam" (*B*, 7:3–4). In contrast to the announcement of 1903, that the *Gesellschaft der Blätter für die Kunst* was not a secret society, George, the editor of the very same Blätter, now seemed to positively reassess the cultural significance of arcane circles. At the same time, the *Merksprüche* of 1904 ridiculed other esoterics and *Lebensreformer*. The two Cosmics Alfred Schuler and Ludwig Klages were singled out for more serious attacks and received the following admonition: "Urgrundschwärmer/ Setzet nicht für den Gott den götzen für den geist das gespenst für den seher die hexe."

The implication was that the true god, *geist*, and *seher* could only be found in the circle around George — indeed, that George himself was the true poet-prophet, a "schöpfergeist" and divinely inspired genius. His community of disciples was bound to him in reverence and gratitude, for it was only through him that they could transcend the "grämlich ich-

süchtige zeit" in which they lived and experience the true meaning of life. They were encouraged to express their adoration of the Master "mit kranz und reigen," arguably a metaphor for poetry. The cultic community that had gathered around George convened in the houses of various disciples and associates, notably those of Lepsius, Bondi, and Wolfskehl, where they performed highly ritualized readings of poetry. Although this created a strong sense of community and cemented the stratified and hieratic structures of the Circle, something was still missing. That the George Circle eventually left such a deep mark in the intellectual history of twentieth-century Germany was only made possible by a further transformation that took place in the second half of the 1900s. Without it, the Circle may well have remained a comparatively marginal and ephemeral phenomenon within the *Lebensreform* movement of the fin de siècle. This transformation was brought about by George's invention of a new godhead: Maximin.

In his programmatic essay of 1910, Wolfskehl invoked Nietzsche's ideas, which he believed to be closely related to those expressed in the *Blätter* and which, he claimed, had been realized in the most accomplished contributions to the periodical. According to Nietzsche, Wolfskehl wrote, the modern artist's task was:

> wie früher die künstler an den götterbildern fortdichteten, so an dem schönen menschenbilde fortdichten und jene fälle auswittern, wo mitten in unsrer modernen welt und wirklichkeit . . . die schöne grosse seele noch möglich ist, dort wo sie sich auch jetzt noch in harmonische, ebenmässige zustände einzuverleiben vermag, durch sie sichtbarkeit, dauer und vorbildlichkeit bekommt und also durch erregung von nachahmung und neid die zukunft schaffen hilft.[12]

George began to attempt this task in 1905 when he proclaimed the birth of a new god: "Dem bist du kind • dem freund. / Ich seh in dir den Gott."[13] In the figure of Maximilian Kronberger, the handsome Munich youth whom George met in 1903 and who died of meningitis the following year, the Master claimed he had discovered "mitten in unsrer modernen welt" a "schöne grosse seele," which, after Kronberger's death, he turned into the poetic creation "Maximin" and which he held up as a model to the German youth. If the cult of Maximin was the product of George's creative ingenuity, it was sustained by the alliance of love and friendship that was his Circle and that was, in itself, reinforced by the creation of this new god. The former "Künstlergesellschaft" had become a proper "bund" and the former friends and followers had been transformed into George's "heilige schaar."[14] This peculiar conception of a nontranscendent god found expression in the essay "Der Heiland," which appeared in the ninth volume of *Die Blätter für die Kunst* (1910).

George's position as master and leader thus came to rest on more than just his creative genius. The cult of Maximin provided him with a new and

powerful form of legitimation that fundamentally changed his public image. This was a mandate not derived from his readers or his fellow artists: he had become a *poeta vates* (the poet as prophet), the mediator of a godhead, the prophet and high priest of his own religion.[15] When his Maximin poetry appeared in 1907 as part of the volume *Der Siebente Ring*, it alienatetd some of the original members of the Circle, but it also attracted new readers and recruits. Fresh subcircles and cells sprang up in various German cities. These were remarkably diverse. Initiation and admission, for instance, took on different forms in the different subcircles: some consisted of coeval companions, all more or less equally close to George; more common, however, were groupings in which only one member was closely tied to George. Members of different subcircles often did not know each other, or knew each other by name only. It was not until 1919 that several of the smaller circles and individual associates of George came together in Heidelberg. Wolfskehl's description of the Circle as a single, organically grown entity arguably applied to the *Gesellschaft der Blätter für die Kunst*, but it failed to capture the structure of the George Circle, which from 1910 onwards existed largely as a virtual community. The George Circle, as Wolfskehl himself acknowledged in the 1910 volume of the *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung*, was a complex network held together by unique bonds and connections.[16]

George's affiliation, since 1905, with Friedrich Wolters, Berthold Vallentin, Kurt Hildebrandt and their Niederschönhausen Circle decisively shaped the public image of the George Circle as well as its future development. These young academics, whom Friedrich Gundolf described as fanatics ("Enthusiasten"), lived in a rural commune outside Berlin. Searching for new methods of education and a new way of life, they gathered around the historian Kurt Breysig who had been loosely associated with George since 1899. More than any of the other groupings, the members of the Niederschönhausen Circle formed a cultic community centered on the myth of Maximin. This myth, as Carola Groppe rightly remarks, "gewann für [sie] lebensweltliche Relevanz."[17]

Initially, George's reaction to the adulation bestowed on him by the members of the Niederschönhausen Circle was somewhat reserved. Gradually, however, he began to embrace their attempts to develop an ideology and to formulate educational doctrines out of his poetical utterances. With his approval and under his scrutiny, they founded the *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung*, which ran through three volumes between 1910 and 1912. Although Gundolf and Wolters were joint editors, the manifestoes "Gefolgschaft und Jüngertum," written by Gundolf, and "Herrschaft und Dienst," written by Wolters, both published in the eighth volume of the *Blätter* in 1910, highlight important differences between both men. In contrast to Gundolf's essay, which largely reiterated the terminology of the *Merksprüche*, Wolters's manifesto introduced

new ideas, eulogized hierarchy and dogma, and called for greater political engagement. As a consequence of Wolters's comments, the members of the Circle began to refer to themselves, *intra muros*, as a "staat," thus adding a political dimension to their sectarian self-image. Unlike Wolters, Gundolf saw in George primarily a poetic and spiritual leader and consistently emphasized the aesthetic foundations and aims of the Circle. This assessment still permeated his book on George of 1920. It was shared, to a large extent, by the members of the Heidelberg Circle, and individual associates like Robert Boehringer, Julius and Edith Landmann, Ernst Morwitz, the later Berthold Vallentin, and in particular, Wolfskehl and Lechter.

After the First World War, Wolters's position in the Circle became more prominent and he soon overshadowed Gundolf, even before George broke with his one-time favorite. Wolters's interpretation of George's teachings, notably in his so-called Blättergeschichte — *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst. Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (1929) — and his zealous activism affected the outlook of many of the younger disciples, in particular the "last generation" of the 1920s. Although religious elements were still part of the Circle's communal life, they were increasingly instrumentalized by Wolters and his followers for political ends. The final object, for Wolters, was "die geistige Tat," which would redeem the German nation and guarantee its future as cultural and intellectual hegemon of the West. George, though he was in many respects critical of Wolters, did not oppose the new direction in which Wolters was taking the Circle. He, too, conceived of his role as a prophet and educator in more expansive, national terms and hoped to make an impact beyond the community of his disciples. Ultimately, however, his goals were paedagogical rather than political. As he had remarked in one of the *Merksprüche*:

> Wenn eine ganze gruppe von deutschen menschen • ob auch in beschränkter zahl und auf beschränktem gebiet • Jahrzehnte hindurch . . . in diesem sinne einer geistigen haltung ja einer lebensführung spricht und handelt • ja ihr höchstes bestreben sieht so kann daraus für die gesamte bildung und für das gesamte leben mehr wirkung ausströmen als aus einer noch so staunenswerten sachlichen entdeckung oder einer neuen Weltanschauung. (*B*, 9:1)

George's priorities, thus, were quite different from Wolters's. His principal concern was education, the formulation of a new worldview that would provide spiritual guidance for the German youth and thus enable a new form of life. According to Wolfskehl, George was trying to instil in the German people a new way of thinking that would allow them to give form and shape to their grand, but inchoate visions and aims so that "der deutsche pathos endlich und endgültig form werde."[18]

George's attitude toward Germany changed markedly in the 1910s and in particular after the First World War, which marked a turning point of sorts in his self-understanding as praeceptor Germaniae. Up to that point, the scion of a Catholic family from the Rhineland had seen himself as a stateless prophet and intellectual journeyman, in ardent opposition to the materialist, bourgeois culture of Imperial Germany. In the 1920s, however, he began to reassess his role as critic and reformer. While he continued to lambast the Second Reich and its institutions, denouncing the vast majority of his countrymen as "herde" or "masse," he now seemed to place his hopes for a future revival of European culture in Germany. He began to propagate the notion of a "geheimes Deutschland," a mystical, eternal entity that lay hidden beneath the manifestations of the offical Germany and that would reveal itself at some point in the future.[19] Although he considered the members of his Circle as heralds and harbingers of this Secret Germany, he did not identify them with it. In the 1920s, at any rate, the idea of the Secret Germany replaced the cult of Maximin as the foundational myth of the Circle.

The last volume of the *Blätter für die Kunst* appeared in 1919. With the exception of the introduction, it only contained poems, which were all published anonymously. The decision to omit the authors' names was symbolic. According to Carola Groppe, it represented a final act of self-sacrifice, the acknowledgement that the purpose of art was to serve the Master and his *Reich*, not poetic self-expression or self-realization.[20] With this act, the Circle effectively discarded its original mission as *Künstlergesellschaft*. It had become a *Lebensgemeinschaft*, a community of men brought together by friendship and love, united by the belief in *Herrschaft und Dienst* and their desire to transform life. Their ideal of "das schöne Leben" was projected in poetry, most notably George's poetry, but it was also embodied in George himself. In the eyes of his followers, the Master represented the model of a supreme being. A lot of the activities within the Circle — the elaborate soirées, pageants and cultic gatherings in Heidelberg, Marburg and, later on, in Berlin — amounted to attempts to enact the beautiful life. There were other activities, more or less ritualized, such as walks, joint travel, communal readings. Particular styles of attire, posture and speech indicated adherence to this higher way of life.

"Das schöne Leben" was also a theme in the scholarly writings produced by members of the Circle. Indeed, most of George's associates after the First World War were scholars rather than poets. While some continued to write poetry, none of the key disciples or "staatsstützen" after 1919 considered themselves primarily as poets. In this respect, too, the Circle had ceased to be a *Künstlergesellschaft*.

To the outside world, the Circle was first and foremost a *Männerbund*. This had a lot to do with the fact that since around 1910, women ceased

to play a major role and were no longer visible as followers of George. It would be wrong, however, to assume that they were insignificant within the new *Lebensgemeinschaft*. In addition to Edith Landmann, who played the role of Eckermann to George's Goethe, there were other women who occupied positions in the circles around George, even if they were rarely noticed by outside observers. They included Diana Vallentin, Erika Wolters, Gertrud Simmel, Josefine ("Fine") von Kahler, as well as Clotilde Schlayer who was George's hostess and daily interlocutor during his final months in Minusio.[21] The Circle's educational program, however, was almost exclusively designed for the male youth of Germany. In his Erfurt murals, executed in 1922–23, the painter Erich Heckel, who was friendly with Ernst Morwitz and Ludwig Thormaehlen, depicted the Circle as a "Welt des Mannes."[22]

If the world of Circle was a *männerbündisch* world, it was also an intensely exclusive world. In the preface to the volume of poems published in 1914, *Der Stern des Bundes*, George stated explicitly that his writings were addressed to a small group of insiders: the poems, he wrote, were "gedacht für die freunde des engern bezirks."[23] Furthermore, later customs such as the avoidance of civil surnames and the replacement of forenames with internal aliases within the Circle contributed to this impression of a secret association, being perhaps further reinforced by George himself through his restless and nomadic lifestyle. Within the Circle, it became customary to avoid surnames and to refer to other members by their agreed aliases — a habit that reinfored the public image of the Circle as esoteric, secluded, and secretive.

On 4 December 1933, George died in the Swiss town of Minusio, near Locarno. His final years had been marred by ill health and heavy personal losses. Johann Anton, Julius Landmann, and Friedrich Wolters had died. Some of his closest disciples, in particular Friedrich Gundolf and Max Kommerell, had parted ways with him. Political disputes between Jewish and gentile members, supporters and opponents of National Socialism, caused deep rifts within the Circle in 1932 and 1933. Some of the youngest associates, representatives of the third generation of disciples, now moved center stage, as they looked after their increasingly frail Master on his last travels. After George's death, the intricate network of friendships and associations that constituted his Circle collapsed with surprising speed. Some of his most cherished disciples, including Claus and Berthold von Stauffenberg, as well as Frank Mehnert, were killed. Many of the Jewish followers, among them Karl Wolfskehl and Ernst Kantorowicz, emigrated. Even after its transformation from Künstlergesellschaft to Lebensgemeinschaft, the Circle was centered and dependent on its charismatic leader. George's death also spelt the death of the unique community he had brought into being.[24]

Notes

[1] This essay is a thoroughly revised and expanded version of Ute Oelmann, "Der George-Kreis: Von der Künstlergesellschaft zur Lebensgemeinschaft," in *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, ed. Kai Buchholz, Rita Latocha, Hilke Peckmann, and Klaus Wolbert (Darmstadt: Institut Mathildenhöhe, 2001), 1:459–64. It has been translated from the German by Julie Deering, Ute Oelmann, and Martin Ruehl.

[2] The term "Mitglieder" was first used in the "Nachrichten" of the *Blätter für die Kunst*. Subsequent references to the *Blätter für die Kunst* are cited in the text, using the abbreviation *B* followed by the volume and page number.

[3] George was not completely bilingual, but he grew up in a house in which French was spoken as a second language.

[4] Stefan George to Arthur Stahl, 1 October 1888, StGA.

[5] Karl Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst und die neueste Literatur," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 1 (1910): 1–18; here, 7.

[6] Karl Wolfskehl, "Merkspruch," *Blätter für die Kunst* 4 (1897): 1–2: "von aller Wichtigkeit ist es die kleineren zu erziehen und hinzuleiten auf dass sie die luft bilden in denen der grosse gedanke atmen kann."

[7] Stefan George to Arthur Stahl, 1, 2 and 6 January 1889, StGA: George refers to himself as a "Socialist, Comunard, Atheist."

[8] Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst," 15–16: "Wenn es an irgendeinem punkte der ganz und gar verstofflichten und verhirnlichten 'Welt' möglich wird ein leben zu schaffen und rein zu erhalten."

[9] The *Lebensreform* activities adopted by George and his followers included swimming, hiking, bodily exercise in the open air, vegetarian food, dietary restrictions, but also secret lore, initiation rituals, and religious prophecy. See, e.g., B. F. Gundolf's remark in a letter to Herbert Steiner, dated 5 April 1909, StGA: "George rate, den Sommer über nur sonnenzubaden und zu schwimmen; auch der Geist könne vampirisch den Körper aussaugen."

[10] See Stefan George, "Der Besuch," *Blätter für die Kunst* 3 (1896): l. George included this poem in his first cycle of verse, *Der Teppich des Lebens und die Lieder von Traum und Tod mit einem Vorspiel* (Berlin: Otto von Holten, 1900 [November 1899]).

[11] In the 1900/01 volume of the *Blätter*, an author remarked that the figure of the *poeta vates* had virtually disappeared from Germany's cultural scene: "Es gibt jetzt nur den gelehrten beamten bürger der gedichte macht und das schlimmste: den deutschen litteraten der gedichte macht" (*B*, 5:2).

[12] Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst," 5–6.

[13] *SW*, 6/7:90.

[14] "Heilige schaar" was an earlier variant of the title for the book that was eventually published as *Der Stern des Bundes* in 1914.

[15] See the fourth verse of George's poem "Einverleibung" from the Maximin cycle: "Ich geschöpf nun eignen sohnes" (*SW*, 6/7:109).

[16] See Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst," 14.
[17] See Carola Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung: Das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890–1933* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997), 223.
[18] See Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst," 16.
[19] See George's poem "Geheimes Deutschland," published in his last volume of poetry, *Das neue Reich* (1928), *SW*, 9.
[20] Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung*, 224.
[21] The proceedings of the 2008 conference on the female associates of the George Circle, held at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, will be published in Ute Oelmann and Ulrich Raulff, eds., *Frauen um Stefan George* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010).
[22] See Mechthild Lucke and Andreas Hüneke, *Erich Heckel. Lebensstufen. Die Wandbilder im Angermuseum zu Erfurt* (Berlin and Amsterdam: Verlag der Kunst, 1992).
[23] Stefan George, *Der Stern des Bundes* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1914), 5.
[24] Ulrich Raulff's comprehensive study of George's "after-life," *Kreis ohne Meister: Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: Beck, 2009) now sheds light on George's many intellectual legacies between 1933 and 1968.

2: Stefan George's Homoerotic *Erlösungsreligion*, 1891–1907

Adam Bisno

"Gestern sagte der M[eister] zu mir, ich sei noch frei wie ein Vogel, da ich noch nicht 16 Jahre sei. Meine Pflicht sei nur, hübsch auszusehen und nett zu sein," Karl Josef Partsch wrote in his diary on 9 February 1930.[1] Partsch seemed to worry little about George's appreciation of youthful male beauty. Not so Cyril Scott, who found it difficult to cope with George's affections.[2] Maximilian Kronberger also expressed misgivings, even if he failed to register the homoerotic nature of the relationship. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, however, recognized George's attentions for what they partly were, though a word for the proclivity did not emerge in correspondence.

Until recently, homoeroticism received scant attention from George scholars; where it appears, George's desire is seen more as a function of his relationships within the Circle, less as an element of self-identification. Robert Norton's biography examines the homosexual nature of some of George's personal relationships. Norton reads Ernst Glöckner's letters, for example, most literally to support the assertion that George did indeed have sex with some of his followers.[3] Thomas Karlauf regards George's sexuality as a challenge, an obstacle, a thing to be transcended.[4] Only then could the carnal yield to the spiritual.[5] Whether they see it as sublimated or acted on, these biographers understand George's desire as operating in semiprivate, in certain confidence, and almost exclusively within the Circle. But desire for men, or the way George chose to represent it, was an integral part of the poet's carefully crafted public persona.

In the early years of the twentieth century, George became a hero to proponents of homosexual emancipation. None of them entered the Circle, but they applauded him from afar. Members of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*, a group of a few hundred homosexually inclined aesthetes, praised George in print for his Neoplatonic, homoerotic project, a move that Marita Keilson-Lauritz sees as illustrative of the simple fact that "even if George would never have called himself 'a homosexual,' the main subject of his texts is love of men and boys."[6] "Everyone who knows anything about Stefan George knows perfectly well that he was a homosexual," wrote Cyril Scott, "the incense-swinging, adulated attempts to gloss over

a well-known constitutional fact in his personality can't fool anyone."[7] By the time of the Eulenburg Affair (1907–9), the greatest homosexual sex scandal to rock Imperial Germany, this aspect of George's reputation worried many of his friends, two of whom (Sabine Lepsius and Karl Wolfskehl) warned him against expounding the manly virtues of male-male love.[8] A fin-de-siècle discourse on homoeroticism circumscribed George's thought and the Circle's self-understandings in this period. To the historian, this discourse provides a useful context for the development of George's aesthetics and politics — a context often overlooked in recent accounts, even if it was all too apparent to George's contemporaries. Reaching back into the fin de siècle, it is possible to see the twists and turns that brought George to his distinctive, though not necessarily original homoeroticism. This orientation formed the basis of a philhellenist, male-supremacist, and elitist *Erlösungsreligion*, the commitment to which bound members of the Circle to their prophetic master. With attention to George's experience as a fin-de-siècle proponent of homoeroticism, this essay aims to identify a path from the personal to the political and situate the resulting worldview in the most pertinent historical context: the masculinist discourse on homoeroticism in fin-de-siècle Germany.[9]

A number of critics have dealt with George's homoerotic *Erlösungsreligion*, Karlauf and Norton included. Another, Stefan Breuer, sees it as a radicalized *Kunstreligion* based on a commitment to a this-worldly deliverance, the promised return to an imagined past of German-Hellenic unity.[10] The homoerotic inflections of that prophecy, however, are not the focus of Breuer's analysis. For her part, Keilson-Lauritz is more interested in George's sexuality. She devotes a book-length study to his homoerotic verse, yet the political implications of George's concept of *gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe* do not feature significantly in her analysis.[11] An ideological and political charge accompanied George's homoeroticism that needs attention. Mapping its valences onto a broader fin-de-siècle discussion of male same-sex desire will help explain, above all, how such a radically illiberal and overtly homoerotic *Erlösungsreligion* gained such currency and power as it did.

Two episodes frame my analysis. The first is George's failed affair with Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1891/2. This experience entailed a substantial dose of sexual revelation for George, who finally recognized his desire for what it was and understood the dangers surrounding it. Jens Rieckmann has argued that Hofmannsthal and George enacted a homoerotic drama of class, stressing the extent to which George's unabashed homoeroticism was an affront to bourgeois convention, in close keeping with the poet's consciously antibourgeois posturing. Hofmannsthal, however, was more ambivalent, at times even conciliatory, when it came to engaging with bourgeois culture and thus accepted its prohibition on eroticizing the bonds between men.[12] While this interpretation makes sense in terms of

the way Hofmannsthal remembered the episode in later life, it does not quite fit the evidence detailing the first encounter. In 1917, Hofmannsthal attributed his parting with George to matters of taste and manners, but in the correspondence of 1891/2, allusions to class were fewer and more ambiguous. With respect to the evidence, Hofmannsthal and George's positions on homoeroticism were neither signifiers of differing class subjectivities, nor the subtext to a battle of wills. Homoeroticism, particularly George's outright attempt to realize his desire, constituted the central issue with which George and Hofmannsthal were dealing. As Ulrich Weinzierl persuasively demonstrates, George's attraction to men and to Hofmannsthal drove the first wedge between the two poets — something that Hofmannsthal and George knew and understood at the time.[13] This essay builds on Weinzierl's interpretation by considering George's perspective and understanding the longstanding effects of this episode for George's politics of homoeroticism.

The second episode is the discovery and deification of Maximilian "Maximin" Kronberger in the first decade of the twentieth century. That encounter reflected the lessons George had learned with Hofmannsthal, as well as the new significance that George's sexuality had assumed. In the year after Kronberger's death, the application of philhellenism, male supremacism, and elitism to a new religion of redemption came to define George's homoeroticism. Through his person, George offered salvation to a society he believed to have grown cold and dead. Its source of divinity being the gorgeous and virile boy, this religion was deeply homoerotic and should thus be understood in the context of the fin-de-siècle discourse on homoeroticism. Its creation was the first step on the road to the Secret Germany, which contained potent appeals to a Greek ideal of male beauty and a Christian concept of redemption, the search for deliverance from the here-and-now.

The story begins in the early 1890s, in many ways a time of crisis for George. After fitful travel from one European clime to another, one capital to the next, George arrived in Vienna in October 1891.[14] In December, he met Hofmannsthal, aged seventeen, some six years younger than George. Though not the first boy to attract George's attentions, Hofmannsthal was nonetheless the only one who understood George's true nature and calling as a poet. But what Hofmannsthal viewed in 1892 as indeed a crisis, George insisted was "siedendes quellendes-stoffloses blut" — the culmination of his soul's great crisis, the shattering of glass, the sinister twilight before the emergence of the *Übermensch*, no less.[15] Hofmannsthal, however, was not excited by appeals to Nietzsche, never having been able to finish *Zarathustra*, which he found lacking in taste, as he wrote to Rudolf Pannwitz in 1917. Tastelessness, as well as bad manners, was a characteristic he also associated with George.[16] Friendship would only be possible when the latter came to terms with Hofmannsthal's

sense of propriety, his insistence on pursuing only the most civilized relationships (*H/P*, 26).

In his letters to Pannwitz, Hofmannsthal blamed his own actions for what had gone wrong nearly two decades prior, writing that George's lack of civility had provoked his youthful self's "unanständigen Angriffs" (*H/P*, 26). What was this attack? And in what ways had George brought out this indecency on the part of Hofmannsthal? Their meeting in the Café Griensteidl and short-lived friendship have been narrated in several studies. By all reports, everything went well at first.[17] The story's retelling here, from George's perspective, aims to clarify what was actually at stake in the events of 1891/2: the issue of George's homosexuality, which introduced a wedge dividing two poets that gained expression in heated, epistolary exchange. Sexual revelation and the effects of an outright accusation on that subject initiated the process through which personal experience gained public significance for George.

George placed high stakes on establishing an acquaintance with Hofmannsthal. In its formative stage at this time was George's *Blätter für die Kunst,* a journal of new poetry around which his circle of acolytes would form. He saw Hofmannsthal's involvement as essential not only for the high quality of his submissions, but also for the publicity he might win the *Blätter* in Vienna's literary circles.[18] Yet on account of something George said during their regular walks, or in reaction to some of his more demonstrative entreaties, including the dispatch of roses to Hofmannsthal's classroom at the Akademisches Gymnasium, Hofmannsthal balked, elucidating his misgivings in a poem titled, "An Herrn Stefan George / einem, der vorübergeht" (*G/H*, 7).

George intensified his pursuit. In the two weeks after Christmas, he sent several letters to Hofmannsthal. In the first, George dismissed all thought of his departure and asked to know when Hofmannsthal would meet him. Another conveyed a cryptic message in the form of a poem, the tone and imagery of which suggested he would be leaving Vienna soon. A third announced what must have been another change of plans, a delayed departure from Vienna. George then communicated his intention to meet Hofmannsthal again in person — he would go to the Hofmannsthal family home if necessary (*G/H*, 9–11). But with Hofmannsthal slow to respond, the meeting did not occur for another six days, when George entered the chosen café to see that Hofmannsthal had, without warning, brought a friend, Felix Salten. George passed a sealed envelope to Hofmannsthal. It described his search for the love of a fellow "Übermensch" and the realization that in Hofmannsthal, he had found his long sought twin brother (*G/H*, 13).

The situation deteriorated. Hofmannsthal's response to George's latest declaration began with an indignant dismissal. What was he meant to do with this oblique and insincere confession, this "Bekennen vor sich hin

und für sich selbst"? Denying the possibility that the two shared any bond so strong and exclusive as that between twin brothers, Hofmannsthal pronounced that as far as the "Wein seines jungen Lebens" was concerned, the bottles were open to all (*G/H*, 14). George next suggested a meeting on the Ring, to which Hofmannsthal responded by returning the gift of two books, no message enclosed (*G/H*, 241). Panicked, George rushed to the Hofmannsthal family home.

What happened there on the evening of Tuesday, 12 January is unknown, but the scene must have been ugly.[19] As soon as George left, Hofmannsthal immediately composed and dispatched a letter to him. It does not survive, but George's response indicates that the content was direct, biting, and dismissive (*G/H*, 241). His response also carries a homosexual subtext that deserves attention:

> Gestern die bücher — heut erst Ihre worte . . . Wenn ich freilich an einen solchen brief gedacht hätte wäre ich am abend nicht zu ihnen gekommen • eher glaubte ich alles andere annehmen zu müssen
> Also auf etwas hin und gott weiss welches etwas "das sie verstanden zu haben glauben" schleudern sie einem gentleman der im begriff war Ihr freund zu werden eine blutige kränkung zu. Wie konnten sie nur so unvorsichtig sein, selbst jeden Verbrecher hört man nach den schreiendsten indizien . . .
> Jede andre aufklärung muss ich natürlich verweigern bevor sie den inhalt Ihres briefes zurückgenommen haben
> Ich muss Sie sofort sprechen: spielen sie nicht übermütig mit dem leben (*G/H*, 15–16).

Although he probably destroyed the letter from Hofmannsthal that prompted this threat, it is possible to read from George's response some of its content. In the first place, we know that the letter was offensive not only for its tone but also for a specific allegation about the depths of George's character. We also know that George was responding to only one insult, and a grave or "bloody" insult at that. Curiously, the next sentence in George's response offers the analogy of the common criminal, leading one to wonder whether Hofmannsthal's insult contained an observation about that aspect of George's character most subversive, transgressive, and, as far as physical homosexual acts were concerned, illegal.[20] Finally, in Hofmannsthal's 1917 letter to Pannwitz, the "indecent attack" could very well connote the impropriety of George's desire, as well as the faux pas of naming that desire outright (*G/H*, 15–16). It is not only possible, but highly likely, that the insulting content of Hofmannsthal's letter lighted upon the fact of George's homosexuality.

Hofmannsthal immediately apologized, and George offered an olive branch of sorts: "Durch Ihre zeilen von gestern thaten Sie genüge — gesellschaftlich . . . ich hasse händel und pose und hätte Ihre hand nicht zurückgestossen obwol ihr schlag mir noch im gesicht brennt." He then

issued an ultimatum: if Hofmannsthal failed to make amends and seek the affection he had "so schmählich" misunderstood, the relationship as such would end, at which point George promised to quit the city immediately (*G/H*, 16–17). He and Hofmannsthal were careful not to name the offensive epithet, preferring implicit references that the two of them would have understood as the mention of homosexuality. To name it was both indecent and dangerous, should the letters fall into the wrong hands.

George next received a letter from Hofmannsthal's father. Assuring the German stranger that he meant no harm, Dr. von Hofmannsthal offered to explain in person the grounds for requesting that his son be left alone (*G/H*, 241). George's lengthy reply stated that he would soon be leaving Vienna, perhaps never to return. Wanting only reconciliation, he wrote, "das konnte denn kein wunder sein dass ich mich dieser person ans herz warf (Carlos? Posa?) und habe dabei durchaus nichts anrüchiges gefunden" (*G/H*, 242). This defensive ploy — invoking the love of Carlos and Posa in *Don Carlos* — was an indirect answer to Hofmannsthal's "shameful" interpretation of George's affection. This was probably the first time anyone had accused George of sexual deviance; that the accusation had come from someone he so cherished was doubly hurtful. Triply hurtful must have been the involvement of Hofmannsthal's father. George could not have known whether Hofmannsthal had divulged the details of the mess, particularly the content of his insult and the behavior that had provoked it. Nevertheless, George had reasons to expect the worst: that Dr. von Hofmannsthal would be indiscreet, that the secret would get out, and that public knowledge of George's inclinations would damage his otherwise praiseworthy career.

Sexual revelation resulted in flight from Vienna. His hopes of union with an equal all but dashed, George tended in the years after 1892 to pursue relationships with boys even younger or decidedly less mature than the Viennese prodigy. There were too many to afford mention here, but one more case helps illustrate the nature and significance of George's desire. In relation to Maximilian Kronberger, George cast himself as the priest and master of a self-styled religion rooted in the revolutionary potential of pedagogical pederasty. With Kronberger and Hofmannsthal, their entrances into George's life a decade apart, experiences of the most personal nature assumed a public significance both aesthetic and political — aesthetic in the transformation of George's approach to his art, political in the national deliverance that the new aesthetic offered.

Early in 1902, George first caught sight of Kronberger, aged thirteen, near Schwabing, Munich's notorious bohemian quarter. In March, he approached the boy and his sister on the Nikolaiplatz and expressed an interest in Kronberger's head. All three met for a portrait sitting the next day, and during the unchaperoned walk homeward, George asked Kronberger whether he was interested in poetry.[21] A year later, Kronberger

and George grew accustomed to regular visits. In March 1903, George visited Kronberger's parents. Their son was not privy to the conversation, but the frequency of subsequent invitations to dine suggests that the meeting must have gone well (*K*, 57). The mistakes George had made with Hofmannsthal's father, he would not repeat with the Kronbergers. Accepting George as a good friend of the family, like a beloved teacher or pastor, Kronberger's parents nevertheless had some reservations about the relationship between their son and a man twenty years his senior.[22] On one of their Sunday meetings, George asked his young friend Max whether he believed that there was a kind of friendship that stood higher than love. Kronberger's mechanical reply was in the affirmative (*K*, 59).

In 1903, shortly after George's return to Munich from autumn travels, events took a bewildering turn for Kronberger. A few days before Christmas, Kronberger met George on his way home from school and came away with the understanding that the poet was very busy and unable to receive him for some time. When, through Kronberger's father, George expressed disappointment at not having seen his young friend at the Circle's New Year celebrations, Kronberger was understandably perplexed (*K*, 65). More mysterious was George's visit to Kronberger's parents the following day. What they talked about remained unknown to Kronberger. After resuming his Sunday visits in January, Kronberger found that George was distant at best, unkind at worst, and apparently racked by "widerwärtigen Gedanken" (*K*, 65). Skipping a regular Sunday with the poet, Kronberger excused himself in a note and promised otherwise to be at George's service.

With no answer from George, he decided to drop by unannounced on Friday, 29 January 1904. A major falling-out occurred. Having waited in the adjoining room for an unusually long time, Kronberger, when he finally saw George, received a long, hard stare. To the inquiry after his health, George did not answer. Instead, with growing ire, he began to reproach his guest for Sunday's absence, taking particular issue with the line of Kronberger's letter promising to be at his service. George made it clear that this phrase, "ich stehe ihm zu Verfügung," was meaningless, and that Kronberger had had no right to write it. In response to Kronberger's protests, George spun around to face his guest and "drohte mir mit dem Finger," the diary reports. If the young man was not going to make time to come by regularly, George admonished, then he should not come at all. The boy responded with an icy "adieu" and the offer of his hand, which George refused to accept. He did not even meet the stare of his injured guest, who recoiled in anger and left the room (*K*, 65–66).

Kronberger decided to sever ties on the grounds that he ought not be told off by George as though he were a child. To make matters worse, when the two ran into each other in the street, George pretended scarcely to recognize his young friend. Kronberger confided to his parents the

events of the past few days and sent a letter less effusive, but no less dismissive, than those of Hofmannsthal: "Nach dem gestrigen Vorkommnis und nach Ihrem kühlen Verhalten gegen mich in der letzten Zeit sehe ich keinen Grund unsere Bekanntschaft weiterzuführen" (*K*, 66–67). George rushed to the Kronbergers' house and, to Kronberger's father, excused himself on account of family matters. On the following day, probably after some encouragement from his father, Kronberger went to see George, who started to give his guest another scolding, now for his unjust letter, but this time the monologue ended in reconciliation. Again, the friendship proceeded apace.[23]

But less than two months later, on a visit to Vienna, Kronberger contracted meningitis. Hours after his sixteenth birthday, he was dead. For weeks, George declared himself incapable of working or making a decision, and while his physical health slowly returned, his spirit would not rally.[24] He styled himself singular in his grief: "was ich darum streite und leide und blute dient keinem zu wissen."[25] But George made it clear that his followers had some part to play in the performance of his sorrow.[26] They were to bear witness to it and follow its development from mourning to deification.

Kronberger's parents soon received a note from George in Gundolf's handwriting. Referring to the deceased as "unser Max," who would live among them in the form of a god, the note preceded a longer letter that described more clearly George's privileged status among Kronberger's mourners, claiming that his grief was comparable only to that of Kronberger's parents themselves.[27] Kronberger's parents might have been responsible for the conception, birth, and upbringing of a god among men, but without the gaze of a prophet, such divinity would have gone unnoticed. First and foremost, what allowed George to recognize in Kronberger the countenance of a god was the countenance of a pretty boy. Although George spilled much ink in praise of Kronberger's verse, it was his youthful beauty that had initially piqued the Master's interest. The whole relationship was predicated on one indelible fact of George's personality: the appreciation of, and desire for, young and beautiful boys. If George elevated such desire to the realm of the spirit, in this case religion, the idea for doing so originated in the rather more corporeal attraction to younger members of the same sex. Hofmannsthal had seen George's attraction for what it was. Kronberger did not, and before he could have, he died.

It was not so much Kronberger's malleability that allowed George to endow him with divinity as it was his absence from the events surrounding his own deification. Where Hofmannsthal had hesitated to an take active role in George's script — "Will mich Ihr Sinn, der selbst die Wege weiter weiß, mit den Zügen des Heilenden schmücken: er darf wenn er muss und er muss wenn er kann" — Kronberger presented an ideal second try

(*G/H*, 14). In 1892, George had required the participation of the pretty boy in his drama of the soul's fulfilment by communion with another. By 1904, such communion no longer prescribed a relationship between equals, however, but a cross-generational exchange that left the authority of interpretation — the role of the seer or prophet — to George alone. This shift accompanied a redefinition of the modes of participation in George's cultural project, a process explicated in Ute Oelmann's contribution to this volume. Related to the intensification of the Circle's hierarchical nature was the commitment to Platonic love, especially its tenet of pedagogical pederasty. Kronberger's passivity is thus crucial to understanding the relationship between George and his god: the boy's literal passing away allowed the Master to rechristen him, deify his body and spirit, and proclaim himself the sole prophet of a homoerotic *Erlösungsreligion*.

Over the course of the following year, George labored over a memorial book for Kronberger, the introduction to which would constitute the clearest outline of George's newly conceived religion. Published early in 1907 but completed as much as a year prior, the book opens to a title page and photograph that signals the homoerotic charge of the ensuing paragraphs.

The gold, black and red *Jugendstil* design is Melchior Lechter's, George's chosen artist for the *Blätter*. The photograph of Maximin, shirtless and turned away from the viewer at a three-quarters angle, indicates nudity and candor. To complement this representation of youthful male beauty, the adjacent page incorporates medievalized images of slim, nude youths seated at either side of the title line. A mystical touch graces the third prefatory page, which shows the Earth illuminated by the light of a nearby star; the ray shines on a giant M for Maximin. Mystery, spirituality, and eroticism also mark the worshipful content of George's opening essay:

> Als wir [uns] zum erstenmal in unsrer Stadt begegneten stand er noch in den knabenjahren. Er kam uns aus dem siegesbogen geschritten mit der unbeirrbaren festigkeit des jungen fechters und den mienen feldherrlicher obergewalt jedoch gemildert durch jene regbarkeit und schwermut die erst durch jahrhunderte christliche bildung in die angesichter des volkes gekommen war. Wir erkannten in ihm den darsteller einer allmächtigen jugend wie wir es erträumt hatten . . . was uns not tat war Einer der von den einfachen geschehnissen ergriffen wurde und uns die dinge zeigte wie die augen der götter sie sehen.[28]

Antique and Christian imagery — the Roman victory arch, the Greek valorization of athletic prowess, and the invocation of a centuries-old Christian culture — succeed each other seamlessly. With the call to unity of vision between the divine and the mortal, all the elements of George's

new religion had aligned by the completion of the memorial book in 1906: the miracle of a savior, the self-sacrifice of his death, the promise of this-worldly salvation to those who hold fast to him, and the central importance of George as the prophet and priest of an eternally youthful deity.

George had combined two of the most potent strands in the *Bildungsbürgertum*'s contemporary understandings of German *Kultur*: the dual and dueling legacies of fifth-century Athens and modern-era Christianity.[29] The Greek tradition lent George a worldview that, in stressing the pedagogical function of love between men and boys, legitimized his desire. The Christians lent him a narrative that, in emphasizing the redemptive power of self-sacrifice and faith, legitimized his crusade to deliver Germany from the frigidity of modern civilization. Although George did not use the compound word *Erlösungsreligion*, his prose and poetry is shot through with promises to help Germany transcend the gamut of fin-de-siècle maladies, including the effects of urbanization and industrialization, the advent of mass culture and politics, as well as feminism and modern science. If anti-Modernism was central to George's injunction to transcend the terrain of withering civilizations, so was his belief that through the forging of an elitist, philhellenic homoeroticism this transcendence would be possible.

The key to understanding the homoeroticism of George's *Erlösungsreligion* is the deification of the body of Maximin. His beautiful form, his youthful exuberance, and his corresponding aptitude for creativity — these three qualities proved his divinity. With his "ungebrochene fülle," a phrase that emphasizes the boy's corporeal and spiritual presence, a youth with the power to walk on water and move mountains, Christ-like Maximin embodied the Circle's inheritance, George argued, both in the here-and-now and in future.[30] His youthful, beautiful (and male) body, above all else, held for George, his Circle, and humanity, the power of deliverance. Desirous of young men and attuned to the beauty of the male form, George was best poised to recognize Maximin's divine qualities. Thus George recast the homoerotic gaze, his own homosexual subjectivity, as prophetic, powerful, and indispensible to the survival and deliverance of humanity.

Incorporating its own logic of power and vision, the *Erlösungsreligion* of the prophet of Maximin was deeply elitist and rigidly hierarchical. George was seer, interpreter, and master in one. Although he made no direct political claims, the memorial book's appeals to the ideals of internal hierarchy and aristocratic self-presentation reflect a stridently illiberal worldview. George's homoerotic *Erlösungsreligion* afforded no place to the will of its followers. There was only one will, and it was that of the prophet, the seer of the miracle of Maximin and executor of his gospel of redemption. The people, moreover — "humanity" — were described as stultified and stultifying: in a word, "erkaltet."[31] Nothing regenerative could spring

from their toil, and it was the job of George the prophet to spread to them the good news about Maximin's deification. It is unclear when this transmission was supposed to occur, or how, but one point is certain: the masses would have no say in the matter. When the time was right, they would receive their redemption or comeuppance at the mighty hands of George's prophetic being.

There are at least three contexts into which historians and critics have slotted George's *Erlösungsreligion*. One camp tends to stress the illiberal nature of George's worldview and the megalomaniacal aspects of his character.[32] Another prefers to see George's *Erlösungsreligion* in the terms of fin-de-siècle aestheticism and early twentieth-century Modernism.[33] A third group claims George for the gay canon and seeks to understand his work and life in the context of fin-de-siècle cultures of homosexuality and homoeroticism.[34] In this vein, and as early as the 1970s, the historian of homosexuality in Germany, James Steakley, compared the George Circle with the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*.[35] His analysis invites a fruitful reassessment of George, his Circle, and their particular brand of homoeroticism.

But what would George have understood as homoeroticism? He never identified as a homosexual, though his contemporaries were often quick to do so. Homosexuality, male love, romantic friendship — none of these terms would have satisfied George. A self-proclaimed, self-styled lover of men, George positioned himself outside the emerging discussion of homoeroticism, homosexuality, and homosexual emancipation in fin-de-siècle Germany.

Within months of the publication of the memorial book to Maximin, the situation for homosexuals in Germany would change spectacularly. It was then that the radical-nationalist newspaper editor Maximilian Harden launched a public attack on members of the Liebenberg Circle, the center of which, Philipp Eulenburg, enjoyed a proximity to the Kaiser rivaled by no one. The resulting libel trials brought debates about homosexuality to the attention of all of Germany. The public disgrace of Eulenburg, who had been denounced as a homosexual and pervert, sent shockwaves even as far as George and contributed in no small part to his Circle's efforts to distance the Master from associations with known homosexuals, particularly the Eulenburg cause, despite or perhaps on account of warnings like that from a professor of literature at the University of Munich, which Wolfskehl paraphrased and dispatched to George. George dismissed the concern out of hand, claiming that Eulenburg and the homoeroticism of the Liebenbergers looked nothing like that of his own Circle.[36]

From George's point of view, this distancing made a good deal of sense. It would be a mistake to assert that there existed a common language between the George Circle, the Liebenberg Circle, and even the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*. The groups differed on several crucial matters, exemplified in part by the Gemeinschaft's lack of hierarchy and the

Liebenbergers' aristocratic conservatism. Indeed, at many junctures and on many points, German homoeroticists talked past, ignored, or even repudiated each other. George's antipathy toward Thomas Mann is well known; the Gemeinschaft's opposition to sexological justifications for homosexual emancipation was even more explicit; and the silence with which George and his Circle met the accolades of contributers to *Der Eigene* speaks volumes about their interest in sharing a liberatory lexicon of male supremacy. Jan Steinhaußen's characterization of a shared literary standpoint on the part of homosexual men of letters in early twentieth-century Germany should therefore be applied with caution to the George Circle.[37] The discursive terrain of same-sex love and desire between men was hotly contested in fin-de-siècle Germany. Discursive affinities, where they can be located, stand in sharp relief against a general tendency toward rancor, discord, and willful ignorance not only among "normal" Germans, but among homosexuals in particular.

Yet these affinities point to a context, if not a shared standpoint, that George unwittingly inhabited: when viewed in comparison with proponents of a similarly philhellenic, elitist, male-supremacist homoeroticism — that of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* — George's *Erlösungsreligion* takes a form decidedly less unique than at first glance. Like the George Circle with its *Blätter für die Kunst*, the Gemeinschaft rallied around a publication, *Der Eigene*, which took its name from Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1845).[38] After 1898, the journal changed its focus from anarchist politics to homoerotic art; it would slake the thirst for a revival of Greek times and Hellenic standards of beauty after centuries of Christian barbarism.[39] The organization, with Adolf Brand and Benedict Friedländer as its heads, asserted the superiority of love between men to love between members of the opposite sex.[40] Their vision was masculinist, even male-supremacist in nature. As men who loved only men, the Gemeinschaft felt they were best poised to understand the fraternal bonds necessary to the cohesion of the nation. They believed that for their homoerotic sensibilities they were the most eligible guardians and governors of Germany, that their love for each other was the point of strength their nation of women and woman-lovers was sorely missing. Their idealization of fifth-century Athenian civilization, particularly its homoeroticism, lent the Gemeinschaft's claims no small amount of legitimacy in a society in which the cultural currents tended to follow the well-trafficked channels of philhellenism.[41] They argued that their homoeroticism predisposed them to understand, indeed to feel most deeply, the historical continuity from antique Athens, through classical German literature, to the present German nation.

Two central tenets of the Gemeinschaft evoke the *Erlösungsreligion* of the George Circle: first, male supremacism; and second, the trumpeting of philhellenic homoeroticism. The Gemeinschaft had many other interests,

some of them shared with the George Circle (e.g., nudism) and others not (e.g., homosexual emancipation from persecution under §175 of the Penal Code). Yet most evocative of George's *Erlösungsreligion* was the Gemeinschaft's commitment to male-supremacist individuality, Neoplatonic concepts of homoeroticism and male beauty, and outspoken antifeminism. Peter Hamecher, a member of the Gemeinschaft, understood the affinity between his group and that of George when he proclaimed that "the male Eros of Plato is no chimera! . . . Only one was capable of the highest, Stefan George, who brought out the heroic ideal by overcoming the temporal and the individual."[42]

The George Circle and the Gemeinschaft shared the sense that German society had lost touch with its Greek roots. On the subject of "Die Nacktheit in Kunst und Leben," another member of the Gemeinschaft wrote of the need to formulate a new aesthetic ideal, similar to (though not an exact reproduction of) that of the Greeks. George echoed this statement. In a conversation with Kronberger, he explained the impossibility of preserving classical forms in modern poetry (*K*, 65). For the George Circle and the Gemeinschaft, the search was on to find out what had happened to the Greek ideal of beauty — specifically beauty pertaining to the male body — and how to repackage and repurpose it in the modern context.

In 1899, Gemeinschaft member and contributor Elisarion von Kupffer invoked this Greek conception of male beauty and infused it with misogynist, antifeminist invective. In the "exclusive service of woman," men had forfeited their masculinity and potency, pathetic in their exercise of a kind of "sham" authority. Calling for the emancipation of men, and thereby inverting the language of contemporary feminism while borrowing from that of the nascent homosexual emancipation movement, he went on to invent the word *Lieblingminne*, roughly translated as "chivalric love," which would restore to German society the Greek ideal of manly beauty (*H*, 35). The institution's power was essentially pedagogical, its referent recognizably Platonic: that the youth would learn the blessing of giving of himself, through the love and concern and teaching that he experienced from his older, wiser lover. Next came a direct ethical and political claim about the value of *Lieblingminne* to the state:

> Thus indeed is the young man educated to be a member of the community, a useful member, who does not always and only have himself in mind. How much closer the individual grows to the individual here, so that the whole in fact feels itself as a whole. This appears ridiculous to many today, because they cannot lay aside their selfishness . . . Mostly the one just faces the other as an eventual enemy, who must be challenged as soon as he gets a wry look; there is always a kernel of a miniature civil war, and that is truly not good for the state. (*H*, 42)

References to Greek homoeroticism and the romantic friendship between Schiller and Goethe support von Kupffer's argument that love between men would be a resource to the nation (*H*, 145–54). It would furnish German society with the fraternal bonds it needed to survive. In this vein, only proponents (and participants) of male love could be true servants to the state, according to von Kupffer, whose argument is tantamount to the assertion of the superiority of those men who love other men. As with George, the homoerotic gaze — the ability to see and to cherish male beauty — is a leader's credential and, by extension, the nation's salvation. This was homoeroticism on the defensive, ready to prove its indispensability to a society bent on denigrating it.

Like that of George, the homoeroticism of the Gemeinschaft was elitist, male-supremacist, and essentially illiberal. Direct involvement in the decision-making processes of the state received little mention in Gemeinschaft writings. Where the Gemeinschaft sought to revitalize society through the restoration of Greek pedagogical homoeroticism, whereby beautiful male members of society would enter into eroticized patron-protégé relationships, George's vision was more radical. Through the eroticized patron-protégé relationship between himself and his god (as well as himself and members of the Circle), George would act as the priest of a new *Erlösungsreligion* that promised a this-worldly salvation under the leadership of an elite homoerotic Circle, the members of which, for their inclinations towards same-sex love, were best poised to spread the gospel about the spiritually and socially regenerative effects of the love between men. But always, George would remain leader, seer, and priest.

It must be noted that some of George's closest followers in fact took wives and had families, yet they made it clear to anyone who would listen that these familial relationships were secondary in importance to those within the Circle. The ways in which they negotiated the conflicting demands of their wives and their master would be a topic for another study.[43] In place of that study, a letter from Gundolf to Sabine Lepsius, one of the few women allowed anywhere near George, is illuminating for its condescending tone. In response to Lepsius's concern over the homoerotic and antifeminist nature of George's *Erlösungsreligion*, Gundolf addressed Lepsius in diminutives and reassured her that all the supposed nonsense about love of boys was in fact never realized in practice. He reminded her that four core members of the Circle were fathers of families, and asserted that the others were always engaged to or lovers of women. The only thing the Circle insinuated, he declared, was that women cannot be men.[44] But as we have seen, George and his Circle insinuated much more than that — they were hardly more subtle than the Gemeinschaft in their advocacy of philhellenic, elitist, male-supremacist homoeroticism. And their antifeminism came from the Master himself, whose preface to the 1911 *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* Robert E. Lerner quotes in

this volume. This characterization of the modern woman as disingenuous, disaffected, and dangerous echoed many of the antifeminist contributions to *Der Eigene*.[45] Yet what the "Georgeans" had, that the Gemeinschaft lacked, was a religion and the promise of redemption to those who followed its prophet.

In the creation of his *Erlösungsreligion* centered on the prophecy of Maximin, George offered deliverance to a whole society. His promise appealed to a narrow if increasingly powerful subset of German society. Followers within and outside the Circle believed in the salvation that George offered. It became a cornerstone of the Secret Germany in the Weimar period. After George's death in December of 1933, two believers would pledge their lives to divergent conceptions of the cause. One was Claus von Stauffenberg, who had been at the center of the poet's attention in his later life. The other was Joseph Goebbels, entirely unknown to George before the Nazis' rise to power.[46]

Whether George's *Erlösungsreligion* was protofascist, as Norton argues, or an example of aesthetic fundamentalism, as Stefan Breuer understands it, is an inquiry better suited to a study of the later years of George's life. An examination of George's fin-de-siècle homoeroticism yields evidence of the *Erlösungsreligion* having developed over a quarter century before Hitler's rise to power, and it is that period to which our attention should turn if we mean to understand George's politics of homoeroticism in its personal *and* public contexts. Between the encounter with Hofmannsthal and the publication of Maximin's memorial book, George found a way to give public significance to private experience. The result was the invention and dissemination of a philhellenic, male-supremacist, elitist *Erlösungsreligion* — homoerotic to the core — that reverberated through Germany's fraught twentieth-century.

In the Weimar and early Nazi periods, masculinist brands of homoeroticism persisted in crass and pernicious forms as an integral ingredient to National Socialist culture.[47] Although the Nazis rejected homosexuality and set about terrorizing known and suspected homosexuals, they nonetheless appropriated many of the ideas within and adjacent to Georgean and Gemeinschaft thinking. Ernst Röhm, head of the SA, designed an ultrachauvinistic politics of masculinity, espoused within a self-consciously homoerotic culture of militarism, violence, and discipline that combined the idealized memory of combat in the First World War with elements reminiscent of the masculinist, male-supremacist worldviews of the Gemeinschaft and George Circle.[48] The apogee of George's popularity came in 1933, when the Nazis rushed to admit him to the Third Reich's Writers' Academy.[49] What attracted them, in part, was the masculinist orientation of his *Erlösungsreligion*, a point of view easily coordinated with the Third Reich's sexual politics. Only after 1934, when Hitler had Röhm murdered in what he billed as a strong stand against the SA's corrupt,

homoerotic culture, did the Nazis' fascination with George turn to ambivalence and then tacit disavowal.

Notes

[1] Karl Josef Partsch, Diary, 9 February 1930, StGA. In the text itself, Partsch wrote "frei wie ein Vogel" and "Vogelfrei" in the margin. I want to thank Ute Oelmann for this ambiguous and revealing opening line; had she not shared Partsch's diary with me, I might never have seen it. I would also like to thank the Centre for History and Economics at the University of Cambridge for a travel grant and its generous support of my MPhil dissertation, the forerunner to this essay. Kristen Loveland, Carla Heelan, and Sunka Simon provided critical feedback at various stages of the project, but my deepest gratitude is reserved for Martin Ruehl for his candid and constructive criticism, friendly advice, and unflagging support during my time in Cambridge and after.

[2] Cyril Scott, *Bone of Contention: Life Story and Confessions* (London: Aquarian Press, 1969), 103.

[3] Robert Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and His Circle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2002), 510–11.

[4] Thomas Karlauf, *Stefan George: Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Karl Blessing, 2007), 65.

[5] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 367–70.

[6] Marita Keilson-Lauritz, "Stefan George's Concept of Love and the Gay Emancipation Movement," in *A Companion to the Works of Stefan George*, ed. Jens Rieckmann (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 207–31; here, 207.

[7] Scott, *Bone of Contention*, 103.

[8] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 450, quotes a letter from Wolfskehl to George, 7 July 1910. For the letter from Sabine Lepsius, see *Gundolf Briefe: Neue Folge*, ed. Lothar Helbing and Claus Victor Bock (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1965), 67–68.

[9] On masculinist homosexuality, see Andrew Hewitt, "Die Philosophie des Maskulinismus," *Zeitschrift für Germanistik: Neue Folge* 9 (1999): 36–56.

[10] Stefan Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus: Stefan George und der deutsche Antimodernismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 16.

[11] Marita Keilson-Lauritz, *Von der Liebe die Freundschaft heisst: Zur Homoerotik im Werk Stefan Georges* (Berlin: Rosa Winkel, 1987).

[12] Jens Rieckmann, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal und Stefan George: Signifikanz einer "Episode" aus der Jahrhundertwende* (Tübingen: A. Francke, 1997), 15.

[13] Ulrich Weinzierl, *Hofmannsthal: Skizzen zu seinem Bild* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2005), 112.

[14] *ZT*, 20.

[15] *Briefwechsel zwischen George und Hofmannsthal*, ed. Robert Boehringer, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1953), 12–14. Subsequent

references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *G/H* and page number.

[16] *Hugo von Hofmannsthal-Rudolf Pannwitz: Briefwechsel 1907–1926*, ed. Gerhard Schuster (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993), 22. Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *H/P* and page number.

[17] For the most recent account, see the prologue to Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 9–27.

[18] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 98.

[19] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 103.

[20] Both the German and Austrian penal code criminalized sex acts between men.

[21] Maximilian Kronberger, *Nachlass* (Zurich: Privately published, 1937). Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *K* and page number.

[22] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 333.

[23] Maximilian Kronberger, *Gedichte, Tagebücher, Briefe*, ed. Georg Peter Landmann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986), 121.

[24] Sabine Lepsius, *Stefan George: Geschichte einer Freundschaft* (Berlin: Die Runde, 1935), 57.

[25] Letter from Stefan George to Sabine Lepsius, undated, StGA. For the Hofmannsthal quotation, see *G/H*, 14.

[26] In the same letter to Sabine Lepsius, George wrote that "aber alles geschieht . . . auch mit für die freunde [*sic*]."

[27] Stefan George to Alfred and Christiana Kronberger, April and May 1904, StGA.

[28] Stefan George, *Maximin: Ein Gedenkbuch* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1907), 1.

[29] Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus*, 17–19.

[30] George, *Maximin*, 2.

[31] George, *Maximin*, 1.

[32] See, e.g., Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus*, and Norton, *Secret Germany*.

[33] See, e.g., Jeffrey Todd, "Stefan George and the Two Types of Aestheticism," in *A Companion to the Works of Stefan George*, ed. Jens Rieckmann (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 127–43.

[34] See, e.g., Keilson-Lauritz, *Von der Liebe*.

[35] James Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (Salem, NH: Ayer Press, 1975), 26–29.

[36] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 451.

[37] Jan Steinhaußen, *"Aristokraten aus Not" und ihre "Philosophie der zu hoch hängenden Trauben": Nietzsche-Rezeption und literarische Produktion von Homosexuellen in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts: Thomas Mann, Stefan George, Ernst Bertram, Hugo von Hofmannsthal* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001), 13.

[38] Harry Oosterhuis and Hubert Kennedy, eds., *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany: The Youth Movement, the Gay Movement, and Male Bonding before Hitler's Rise* (New York: Haworth, 1991), 2.

[39] Oosterhuis and Kennedy, *Homosexuality and Male Bonding*, 3.

[40] Oosterhuis and Kennedy, *Homosexuality and Male Bonding*, 4–5.
[41] See Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996).
[42] All direct and indirect quotations from *Der Eigene* and members of the Gemeinschaft are Kennedy's translation and taken from Oosterhuis and Kennedy, *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany*, 97–98. Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *H* and page number.
[43] Gundolf's negotiation of his conflicting allegiances receives careful and fascinating treatment in Ann Goldberg, "The Black Jew with the Blond Heart: Friedrich Gundolf, Elisabeth Salomon, and Conservative Bohemianism in Weimar Germany," *The Journal of Modern History* 79, no. 2 (2007): 306–44.
[44] *Gundolf Briefe*, 67–68.
[45] "Einleitung der Herausgeber," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 3 (1912): iii–viii.
[46] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 734.
[47] Andrew Hewitt, *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism and the Modernist Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996); and Tim Pursell, "Queer Eyes and Wagnerian Guys," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 1 (2008): 110–37; here, 115.
[48] Eleanor Hancock, "'Only the Real, the True, the Masculine Held Its Value': Ernst Röhm, Masculinity and Male Homosexuality," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8, no. 4 (1998): 616–41.
[49] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 727.

3: The Secret Germany of Gertrud Kantorowicz

Robert E. Lerner

If one were to imagine a study called "The Women of the George Circle," who would be among the cast of characters?[1] Given the Master's gender preferences, the cast would not be large. One might include several women by virtue of their proximity to prominent disciples: Hanna Wolfskehl, Erika Wolters, Fine von Kahler — the last intimate with both Friedrich Gundolf and Ernst Kantorowicz. But these women, however lively, had rather little independent intellectual profile. One might consider as well two women George knew and for whom he showed respect: Georg Simmel's wife Gertrud, who wrote books on philosophical and social problems, and Margarete Susman, the prolific literary and cultural critic. Yet even these two were too far apart from George to be counted as more than distant relations. Which leaves the big three: Sabine Lepsius, Edith Landmann, and Gertrud Kantorowicz. In terms of their relationships to George, Lepsius was probably the closest (at least until about 1912) and Landmann the one who was most like a *Jünger* in writing on behalf of the cause, but Kantorowicz was probably the woman the Master loved best.

Gertrud Kantorowicz was born into a milieu of luxury in Posen in 1876 as the daughter of the senior partner of one of the city's largest manufacturing enterprises in a leading industry — alcoholic beverages.[2] Wonderfully evocative memoirs written by her niece describe the younger Gertrud:

> She was small and graceful but not willowy, in fact she was very strong and sporting. She was not beautiful like our mother, but her reddish-brown hair and intelligent eyes made one not notice that. Her courage and disdain for danger made her another example for us. There was nothing soft or silly about her, and she implanted in us her love for the mountains. Our father loved mountain hiking also, but we never had a chance to do that together, as Mutti could not keep step with him, owing to a weak back . . . But Tante Gertrud, she was something — like a mountain goat![3]

Drawn to the intellectual life, Kantorowicz was one of the first German women to obtain a PhD in the Humanities, in art history. While studying

in Berlin she fell under the spell of Georg Simmel. Openly, she was Simmel's disciple and assistant; clandestinely, she was his mistress. In 1907 she bore Simmel a daughter, a fact that was hidden from all until after Simmel's death in 1918. Before the Great War, she published a study on fifteenth-century Sienese art and translated Bergson's *Évolution créatrice* (1907) into German.[4] Although afterwards she published little, she worked for many years on a conceptual analysis of classical Greek art that was brought out posthumously.[5]

Kantorowicz's last years were dramatic.[6] She was in England in 1938 and could have stayed there, but she chose to return home during the Czechoslovak crisis.[7] Then, after the outbreak of war, when the persecution of Jews became murderous, she entered into arrangements to reach the United States via Cuba. A job was found for her to teach art history at Skidmore College, but the wheels of bureaucracy moved too slowly for her to leave Germany before it became illegal. Accordingly, in the spring of 1942 she engineered a plan to cross over into Switzerland illegally. As in a dramatic film script, Kantorowicz, then sixty-five, led a brigade comprising herself and four other women — the youngest sixty-three, the eldest eighty — that managed to travel from Berlin to the border near Bregenz with false documents. There they waited in a small town under dubious pretexts for several weeks while their ration cards were expiring. Finally a preappointed signal came that they could cross the border with some guides. One of the five made it but the other four women were caught. One immediately took poison and another was transported to "the East" and never heard from again. The remaining two were Kantorowicz and "Tante Clärchen," the eighty-year-old mother of Ernst Kantorowicz. Although also clearly "East cases," they were sent to Theresienstadt owing to Gertrud's "connections," and both died there before the war's end.

Kantorowicz's credentials as a "Georgean" are impeccable. She met Stefan George in Berlin in 1898 and soon after became the only woman to publish in his *Blätter für die Kunst.* Until 1914 she and the poet saw each other frequently.[8] Indeed, George, who, with his penchant for ironic nicknames, called her the "Dottoressa," sometimes lived in her quarters in Berlin's Westend. Some even wondered whether the two might marry, and George himself once spoke to Sabine Lepsius to the same effect. As Lepsius reported, George said he could be inspired by any unusual person regardless of sex, naming Kantorowicz as evidence and as a perfectly suitable candidate for marriage to him.[9] The two lost touch during the war, and afterwards Kantorowicz refrained from reestablishing contacts because everyone now knew the truth about her having borne a daughter to Simmel and she feared the Master's wrath for having kept him in the dark. But in the mid-twenties she made a pilgrimage of repentance and George absolved her.[10] When the Master died in 1933 she wrote to Edith Landmann that it seemed the end of the world, and that nothing was left

without his guidance.[11] In March of 1941, while attending to affairs necessary for her flight from Nazi Germany, she took time out to read aloud to a younger woman what she described as the most beautiful things from George's *Stern des Bundes* (1914).[12]

Where did Kantorowicz stand concerning the themes of this volume? This essay will treat three topics that are most pertinent: her position as a woman, her position as a German, and her position as a Jew. Because her expressions on political and social issues are extremely sparse, the discussion cannot be limited to the Weimar period alone, and even so her views must often be inferred from her actions.

Kantorowicz was vastly more interested in abstract philosophical questions than in concrete social ones: her incessant talk about "Wesen" and "Schicksal" often seems like caricature. (Her mother once volunteered that Gertrud's older sister Else's letters were much more interesting than Gertrud's because they had real content: "weil mindestens etwas darin steht."[13]) Out of fifty letters that Kantorowicz wrote between her arrival in Berlin in 1897 and the outbreak of the First World War, she never once volunteered any explicit opinions about politics or society.[14] Who knows whether during that period she ever read a newspaper? Although she referred several times in passing to her domestic servants ("Mädchen") in her correspondence, she left them nameless. Surely she never left the comfort of Berlin's villa quarter of Westend to see how the working class was living in rental barracks. Nor did the guidance of her mentors, George and Simmel, lead in such directions. Elly Knapp (later the wife of Theodor Heuss) wrote home in 1906 after an evening at the Simmels that they had a small cultural world of their own. According to Knapp, no one in the Simmel household spoke about the issues concerning Berlin at the time, but rather about the characteristic rhetoric of the French from Dauphiné.[15]

One might have thought that an exception to Kantorowicz's indifference to social problems should have lain in the realm of women's issues, for while she had no personal reason to care about poverty she definitely had grounds to care about gender discrimination. In her day girls were allotted fewer school years than boys and could not gain the *Abitur*. Accordingly she herself had to gain private instruction to make up missing subjects, such as Latin, in order to qualify for the university. Even then she was not allowed to matriculate because of her sex but could only register as an auditor, which meant that she needed to obtain the permission of individual faculty members in order to attend their classes. Female students, moreover, were still targets of ridicule: a fraternity journal of 1896/97 offered the rhyme: "Obenan an jedem Tage / Steht die leidge Frauenfrage. / Statt im Kochbuch, liest man Häckel [*sic*]: / Fin de siècle."[16] Since auditors could not qualify for the doctorate, Kantorowicz had to move from Berlin to Zürich to finish her stud-

ies, even though the Zürich faculty in her field of art history was below par. And yet she neglected to refer to her hardships or to associate herself with the vigorous liberal women's movement, which just then was addressing educational opportunities as its highest priority. One should not be misled by the fact that in 1910 she published her study on Sienese art in a volume that bore a dedication to Helene Lange, the leading personality of German bourgeois feminism. Three female authors (another was Edith Landmann) collaborated on this publication, which bore the dedication: "Ausdruck des Dankes und der Verehrung für Helene Lange."[17] Yet there is no independent evidence that Kantorowicz ever had anything to do with Lange.[18] Instead a letter she wrote to Margarete Susman clarifies the matter. Here she explained that she had accepted an invitation to contribute to a Festschrift from those she called "die akademischen Weiber," first out of propriety, and above all to ensure a fixed deadline. As she wrote, she was indifferent to the particular circumstances and realized that her participation might seem like a fraud. Although she qualified this with the remark that she found the aim of the project not unsympathetic; that was the height of her enthusiasm.[19]

The real test regarding feminism came late in 1911 on the occasion of the unsigned stentorian manifesto that prefaced the third volume of the George Circle vehicle, the *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung*.[20] At the time everyone assumed that this was written by one of the two editors, Friedrich Wolters or Friedrich Gundolf, implicitly with Stefan George's imprimatur. But later Kurt Hildebrandt revealed that George himself had written it.[21] A string of proclamations betokened a sharp turn away from George's previous stance of hermetic aestheticism, one of which concerned the so-called "modern woman":

> Wir befeinden nicht die frau, sondern die »moderne frau«, die stückhafte, die fortschrittliche, die gottlos gewordene frau . . . Die moderne frau hat sich herausgestellt als die treueste vorkämpferin aller fortschrittlich ungeschichtlichen, platt humanitären, flach rationalistischen und flach religiösen ideeen, ja sogar einige der schlimmsten wie die theosophie und die friedensbewegung sind gerade von weibern ausgegangen . . . Dass die Deutschen, wie es die Franzosen eben sind und die Amerikaner werden, sich in ein femininisiertes volk verwandeln, darin liegt eine grössere soziale gefahr als in tausend von den zeitungen beschrienen einzeldingen.

The final lines of the manifesto were expressly Manichean in envisaging a war of "Ormuzd" against "Ahriman," and hence implicitly calling readers to take sides. Not surprisingly many preferred Ahriman. Two weeks after the manifesto appeared, Gundolf wrote to the Master expressing surprise at the negative reaction while conceding that it was perhaps

understandable in the case of women.[22] Among the opponents were the philosophers Heinrich Rickert and Georg Simmel. Rickert, whose father had earlier distinguished himself as a spokesman on behalf of women's education, wrote from Freiburg to his colleague Simmel in Berlin asking him to lodge a strong word of protest, to which Simmel replied that he shared Rickert's outrage and had already protested, but doubted that it would do much good.[23] Most likely Simmel was taking the part of his wife, who was particularly exercised. The year before she had published, under her pseudonym of Marie Luise Enckendorff, a book called *Realität und Gesetzlichkeit im Geschlechtsleben*, which called on women to worship their own gods.[24] Gertrud Simmel and Stefan George had been good friends until then — George actually preferred the wife to the husband — but now she wrote to him with outrage (presuming that Wolters or Gundolf had written the manifesto) that he had let his young followers throw mud on her.[25]

Most indicative of how the manifesto's diatribes could affect an independent-minded woman who was closely associated with George is the case of Sabine Lepsius. She was one of the very few turn-of-the-century German women who combined a professional career with marriage, although she relegated herself to the specialty of painting flattering portraits of women and children — for which she found plentiful commissions and which she could do with relative speed — while her husband Reinhold specialized in painting "great men" such as professors and *Geheimräte*.[26] Consequently Lepsius showed sensitivity to her status as a woman in her correspondence and diaries. Apropos her early education as a musician she firmly believed that if she had only been a boy her teachers would not have dared to keep her out of the composition class, "denn nicht Talent, sondern Hosen sind das ausschlaggebende: ein Königreich für ein Paar Hosen!"[27] In 1897, after she had turned to painting, she wrote to her husband that she had had a successful day, and that the work she had done would have attracted admiration if it had been painted by him rather than her.[28] Complaining about Georg Simmel's division of male and female culture in a letter to her husband of 1902, she lamented Simmel's continual denial of the collaboration of women in culture, arguing that on the contrary it is the women of a country that determine the quality of its art.[29] These were private expressions, but most remarkable for a woman who was close to George (and named her firstborn son Stefan in his honor) is the fact that Sabine Lepsius gave a paper at an international women's congress in Berlin in 1904.[30]

Clearly Lepsius had some ambivalence concerning the status of the "modern woman." A critical stance appears in an article, "Über Berliner Kultur," published in 1907. Here she inveighed against what she saw as a completely distorted view of women's rights, which held that "jedes nette Gänschen," instead of learning housekeeping and child rearing, horticul-

ture and nursing, should start preparing for the *Abitur*; according to her such little geese gave a bad name to all full-blooded women, "seien es nun gesegnete Mütter oder kräftig in einem Beruf stehende Frauen."[31] Nevertheless, in response to the appearance of the first issue of the *Jahrbuch* in 1910, which merely contained an oblique criticism of women's independence by Kurt Hildebrandt, Lepsius wrote in August to Gundolf:

> Hören Sie mich an: Die Frauen wieder hörig zu wünschen wäre gleichbedeutend mit d. Wiedereinführung des Ghettos . . . Für Euch soll die Frau in erster Linie "bequem" sein. — Bequem aber sind nur Mägde oder Dirnen. Beide pariren [*sic*]. Eine Frau die Würde hat (und mir scheint Ihr liebt die Würde) gehorcht nicht wie ein Hund, sondern sie verständigt sich mit dem Mann geradeso wie der Freund mit dem Freunde.[32]

Evidently the *Jahrbuch* issue of late 1911 with its broadside against "the modern woman" made matters worse, for it was just around that time that Lepsius engaged in ever more strained debates with George about "the place of women" which led to her break with the Master. As she wrote, she finally recognized what she described as the impossibility for a person like her to keep on accepting the rules and regulations of Stefan George.[33]

Gertrud Kantorowicz, in contrast, never came to such a conclusion. At Christmas time of 1910 she wrote to Margarete Susman about a recent meeting with George that had really made her feel his true greatness,[34] and from the time the *Jahrbuch* manifesto appeared until her volunteering for service as a nurse in 1915 in the Great War, there is no evidence that this confidence was shaken.[35]

Turning to Kantorowicz's stance regarding her homeland, her lack of any ostensible interest in public affairs was replaced by ardent patriotism as of the summer of 1914. Surely she now read the newspapers. On 2 August 1914 she headed a letter to her friend Rudolf Pannwitz "Erster Mobilmachungstag," and wrote that in such momentous times it was inconceivable that they could be faint-hearted. On the tenth she wrote that the war itself was pure greatness, and the people were greater than they had ever been. On the nineteenth:

> Darum kann ich auch davon nicht schweigen, dass ich der Realität dieses Krieges angehöre auf meinem ganzen Wesen . . . mit meinem Wesen, das zu Deutschland eine Beziehung hat wie ein Atemzug zum Körper, aus dem er kommt . . . Ich frage nicht wie richtig ist dieser Krieg. Ich weiss nur er ist.[36]

In 1915, she wrote to Margarete Susman about her bitterness at living at home in peace, and her "Kriegsbessenheit." Determined to engage directly

in the war effort, Kantorowicz took nursing courses and then in 1915 served on a hospital train carrying the wounded from the Russian and Serbian fronts.[37] In 1916 she assumed the direction of a military convalescence center in Constantinople and mingled with members of the German High Command. Among her associates was General Hans von Seeckt.[38] Germany's defeat was a jab of pain. Fifteen days after the armistice she wrote to Pannwitz that her country was her faith, and that thinking about the current situation while all was in ruins was almost too much for her soul.[39]

As much as one would like to know how long Germany remained Kantorowicz's "faith," very little evidence is available to provide an answer. Although she lived in Berlin from late 1918 until the summer of 1921, her correspondence from this period hardly ever refers to the contemporary disturbances. One remark about politics appears in a letter of March 1919 to Margarete Susman, wherein she says that she can never be a Socialist but is prepared to accept the "Revolution" as the only realistic possibility, at least for the present.[40] Later, in an undated letter to Susman, probably of 1927, she implicitly reveals that she stands to the right of her friend, who sympathized with Socialism, but also insists that she does not want politics to mar their friendship.[41] Aside from that, one hint might support the conclusion that Kantorowicz's acceptance of Weimar was grudging: in 1932 she referred to the legal historian Hermann Kantorowicz (no relation), who was a rare professorial defender of republicanism and the League of Nations, as "selbst dieser Mann."[42]

Absolutely nothing specific appears in Kantorowicz's correspondence about Hitler or the Nazis. Although I have at my disposal thirty-one letters she wrote between 1929 and 1941, none alludes to current events: nothing about elections, the Nazi takeover, racial restrictions, Anschluss, Munich, Kristallnacht.[43] Nevertheless, despite this silence one can be reasonably confident that she was no admirer of the Nazis. In 1933 she engaged energetically in helping Margarete Susman to find refuge abroad when the latter was forced to leave Germany precipitously because of her politics, and she expressed her solidarity by writing "die Gegenwart braucht Dich, Dein Sein, Dein Wort."[44] Later, as conditions for Jews in Germany worsened, she became a virtual grandmotherly Scarlet Pimpernel in helping others to leave. Robert Boehringer reports that Kantorowicz helped a young man elude arrest by bringing him personally to an unpatrolled border; Michael Landmann reports that she helped strangers make arrangements to leave whose distress she inferred from hearing them talk in telephone booths.[45] After Kristallnacht, when Friedrich Gundolf's brother Ernst was interned in Buchenwald, she arrived from Berlin with a forged letter testifying that his emigration papers were in order, and brazenly presented it to the *Kommandant* with the assertion "Hier bekommt man doch sein Recht!"[46]

And yet she did not emigrate herself, although the opportunity was there. She travelled to England at least once in 1933 and once in 1934.[47] In 1936 she visited her daughter in Palestine (on which more later) and traveled in Switzerland and Italy.[48] In 1937 she went to Italy again and lived for several months in Settignano near Florence.[49] None of these trips was connected with plans for emigration, but a different situation arose in 1938 when a wealthy friend who lived in England, Lucy Ernst-Hoesch, obtained a permanent visa for Kantorowicz and urged her to come and stay. Kantorowicz crossed the Channel to take up the offer in the late summer, but still she did not think of the Channel as the Rubicon. According to Margarete Susman's son Erwin, who was then present, she adamantly announced her decision to return home in the context of the Czechoslovak crisis in September with the words: "Wenn es Krieg gibt, gehöre ich nach Deutschland."[50]

How can one explain this all but suicidal behavior? Kantorowicz was under no illusions about the hardships she was bound to face. Michael Landmann reports that when some of her friends in England asked her what she expected on her return she replied grimly, "die Hölle."[51] But she was impervious to danger and viewed her mission as helping the infirm and the aged who needed her, with her training as a nurse. Her cousin "Gretel" Liechtenstein (Ernst Kantorowicz's sister), was suffering from multiple sclerosis and could barely walk, her cousin Grete Neisser was showing signs of mental disturbance, and Gretel Liechtenstein's mother, Clara, was seventy-six years old and living alone.[52] Kantorowicz's sister-in-law, Eva Kantorowicz, wrote in August 1939 of her concern about Gertrud, who she said could have left long ago but stayed to help others.[53]

Devotion to the needy is thus a fully sufficient answer to the riddle of Kantorowicz's trip in the wrong direction. Yet perhaps there is something in her pronouncement that if there was war she belonged in Germany that also suggests an emotional commitment to the homeland. Perhaps another hint to the same effect comes from Michael Landmann, who wrote that in addition to explaining her intent to help those who needed her, Kantorowicz invoked a passage from the letters of the younger Pliny concerning a Roman senator, Corellius Rufus, who had been suffering from an excruciatingly painful disease. When asked why he did not commit suicide, as was customary among noble Romans in such circumstances, he answered, "Why do you think I endure these terrible pains for so long? So that I might outlive that criminal [Emperor Domitian], if even for a day" ("ut isti latroni vel uno die supersim").[54] But if Kantorowicz wanted to outlive Hitler, "if even for a day," common sense might have told her that she had a greater chance of success by staying in England. Can one infer, then, that she was bent on doing this in Germany, as if to bear witness?

Kantorowicz's willingness to return to Germany in 1938 would seem to be complemented by her thoroughgoing lack of self-identification as a

Jew. Although she never converted (so far as is known), she gave her daughter by Simmel the name of "Maria Angela" and brought the baby to be raised in Belgium by practicing Catholics, after which she moved her to Germany to a foster mother who was a devout Protestant and took "Angi" to church. After Simmel's death Kantorowicz assumed the mothering and had Angi confirmed as a Protestant in a ceremony that she termed "schön u[nd] feierlich."[55] None of this was unusual, for it corresponded to the practices of Kantorowicz's brother and sister. Franz Kantorowicz and his family celebrated Christmas at home as late as 1935 with all the trappings including a baby Jesus crib,[56] and Else Milch (née Kantorowicz) had all five of her children baptized in Protestant churches.[57] (A joke of the day referred to the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche as the "Taufhaus des Westens.")

Is there any evidence to show that Kantorowicz ever acknowledged a Jewish identity? There is some, but it hardly makes her devout. In 1910 Sabine Lepsius wrote to her husband, who was then away, that Gertrud had hosted her and Stefan George in Westend on the occasion of Yom Kippur.[58] Notably, however, the date in question was 31 October, which was not in fact Yom Kippur, but Halloween. In 1919 Kantorowicz drew in correspondence on the wisdom of Rabbi Nachman and the saying of a Zaddik (probably obtained via Simmel's disciple, Martin Buber), but this is an isolated example, overwhelmed by frequent references to the Greek and German classics.[59] Later, in 1930, she published a review of a book by Margarete Susman about *Frauen der Romantik* (1929) in *Der Morgen*, a liberal Jewish philosophical and literary journal. But the review refers to Judaism only once — in terms of an emptiness conditioned by Rahel's "religiös-heimatlose jüdische Seele." Moreover, since Susman herself published in *Der Morgen*, it is reasonable to infer that Kantorowicz's laudatory review in this Jewish publication was set up by the contact.[60]

Something new arose around 1934 when Kantorowicz started reading parts of the Hebrew Bible and engaged in study of the Hebrew language.[61] She published a review of a new book of poetry by Karl Wolfskehl in a Swiss journal in 1936, wherein she insisted that Wolfskehl's turn toward the God of the Old Testament was compatible with his earlier ties to Stefan George, and asserted that thus the first truly great and new poet to grow out of the Circle was a German Jew.[62] Nevertheless, although one might be tempted to account for Kantorowicz's new interest in the Hebrew Bible and her recognition of Wolfskehl's Jewishness as acknowledgments of the heritage of her ancestors in the face of Nazi persecution, the explanation more plausibly lies in her relations with her daughter Angi. In 1932 Kantorowicz's daughter had rebelled against her upbringing by converting to Judaism and attending synagogue services in Berlin's overtly orthodox Grenadierstraße.[63] A letter to Edith Landmann of July 1933 shows her exulting in her newfound identity and decision to leave for Palestine:

"Wissen Sie, das hebräische Wort für die Auswanderung nach Palästina heisst 'Hinaufsteigen' und Opfern! Wir werden versuchen so zu leben . . . aber darüber das grosse Glück, ein Volk zu haben — für mich ganz neu — und aus der Bibel u. dem Chassidismus neues Wissen und Aufgabe, alles ist verwandelt und neu."[64] Angi's cousin, Ellen Fischer, remembered seeing her off in November 1933 at the train station for the *alija* and noticing that Angi carried only one small piece of luggage. When Ellen asked if that was all Angi was taking with her, Angi laughingly replied that of course it was, for what more could she need than one change of underwear, another dress or sweater, and the Bible and *Faust*?[65]

Ellen Fischer adds that for Gertrud this step was utterly inconceivable, a judgment confirmed by Angi's closest friend, Käte Ledermann, who remembered a meeting in the summer of 1933 in which Angi announced her decision directly in the face of her mother's opposition.[66] Kantorowicz's views appear in her own words in the first letter she sent to Angi in Palestine (December 1933): "Und Du Geliebtes bist nun in 'unserem' in Deinem Lande, das erst das Land werden muss. Es macht meinen Glauben nicht geringer, dass die Gemeinschaft noch nicht da ist, die Sinn u. Recht dieses Volkes zu sein scheint. Aber für mich ist das leichter als für Dich, weil ich zu wissen glaube, nun schon lange, dass das Volk von Priestern eben nicht ein Volk ist."[67] Gertrud Kantorowicz was nonetheless clearly very attached to her daughter, and visited her in 1936. According to Ellen Fischer it was then, while the two were hiking together in the Carmel mountain range above Haifa, that the mother and daughter truly found each other, and Gertrud came to an understanding of Angi's love for her new land and why she devoted all her being to it.[68] All told, then, it seems warranted to interpret Kantorowicz's "Jewish turn" primarily as a means for understanding and relating to her daughter.

Given that she was at least reflecting on her Jewishness after her daughter's conversion, it comes as a bombshell to learn that during the same period she applied for "Aryanization." This was reported in notes about the attempted flight to Switzerland drawn up in 1964 by one Artur Sommer, who had been a Wehrmacht officer and leader of a Berlin group that had aided Kantorowicz in her flight plans.[69] Sommer's notes contain verifiable circumstantial information about Kantorowicz and her relatives, and the fact that he transmitted them to his friend, the George disciple Edgar Salin, supports the conclusion that he would not have been likely to invent details for the sake of color. His account, therefore, must be judged as trustworthy, and here is the relevant passage: "Da es einem Verwandten gelungen war, hatte auch sie [Gertrud Kantorowicz] zum Spass jahrelang einen Arisierungsantrag laufen. Daher manchmal beim 'Rassenamt.' Im Vorzimmer der Schwarzen [the SS] erwartend, schrieb sie flugs ein schönes Gedicht auf die Tapetenarabeske vor ihr."[70] The reference to the relative who had succeeded is to the case of Erhard Milch, a Nazi air-force general

about whom Göring supposedly made his notorious remark: "Wer Jude ist, bestimme ich." Whatever the actual circumstances of Erhard Milch's birth, the belief was certainly held in the Kantorowicz family, and independently in 1936 by Victor Klemperer, that Milch was half Jewish, a fact that lends further credibility to Sommer's account.[71] Although Sommer tries to make light of the story by claiming Kantorowicz's application for Aryanization was just a joke, processing forms and waiting in the antechambers of Nazi officialdom would hardly seem humorous.[72]

Assuming Sommer's account to be true, the best way to account for it is to refer to Kantorowicz's motto during the thirties, as reported by Michael Landmann: "Wenn es mit den weissen Tasten nicht geht, so geht es mit den schwarzen Tasten."[73] Landmann adds that Kantorowicz often acted against what was commonly accepted, and that her courage bordered on dare-devilry.[74] Moreover, independent evidence confirms Kantorowicz's streak of antinomianism: as she wrote to her cousin Soscha Salz in 1941 (the last surviving letter), "zu grosse löschen alles Kleinere aus."[75] In this case the "larger" would have been the freedom to help others and the smaller the maintenance of a Jewish identity. Since Kantorowicz apparently did have connections in high places,[76] she might have thought she had some chance of accomplishing her goal, but in that case she would have needed to lie about her parents.

Not Hebrew, but Attic Greek was for Gertrud Kantorowicz the divine language. Sabine Lepsius reported that the Classical Greek tragedies were Kantorowicz's Bible; in January 1941 Kantorowicz wrote to Soscha Salz that she was ignoring air-raid sirens and reading Greek poetry — "immer wieder der Brunnen des Lebens."[77] On her trip from Berlin to the Swiss border in 1942 she translated the final chorus from Euripides's *Medea*: "many things the gods bring to unexpected ends; what seemed likely does not come to pass; and, for the unlikely, God finds a way."[78] Among the verses she wrote on scraps of paper in Theresienstadt is one that concludes with the line: "Ach und die sonne Homers spielt um die dumpfeste Stadt."[79]

Kantorowicz's ever-shining light from Greece reflects Stefan George's "Hellas ewig unsere Liebe." Gertrud Kantorowicz was a model disciple. Her indifference to feminism enabled her to remain close to George; her welcome of patriotic war as "pure greatness" was compatible with the poet's dithyrambs of bellicosity; and her indifference to her Jewishness was characteristic of most of George's Jewish associates (with the exception of Karl Wolfskehl), who were Jewish, but not too Jewish. Michael Landmann wanted to see a connection between Kantorowicz and George in another way, for he proposed that together with the anti-Nazi, Wolfgang Frommel, Kantorowicz was one of the rare disciples who not only gained their aesthetic and cultural education from the Master but took from him his "kompromissloses Wagnis im Geschick der Zeit."[80] Yet,

aside from doubts that might be raised about George's own record of "daring," Kantorowicz's case raises vexed questions about what it means to be "uncompromising."

Notes

[1] This essay was improved as a result of information exchanged at the conference In Search of the Secret Germany (Cambridge, March 2002). My thanks in particular go to Professors Peter Hoffmann and Robert E. Norton. Very special thanks of a different order go to the following people who knew Gertrud Kantorowicz and whom I have interviewed by telephone or in person: Beata Alden, Erwin von Bendemann, Gertrude Meyer, Dr. Eva Peters Hunting, Constance Sattler. Permission to quote from writings by Gertrud Kantorowicz has been granted to me by her niece, Gertrude Meyer, and permission to quote from the memoirs of Ellen Fischer (another niece) has been granted to me by her daughter, Constance Sattler. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Eva Peters Hunting for consigning to me a large repository of relevant evidence, mainly letters from her grandparents Eva and Franz Kantorowicz sent to their daughter Vera in the 1930s, and for allowing me to quote from this material. I draw as well on documents in three archival repositories: the Deutsches Literaturarchiv (Marbach am Neckar) (henceforth DLA), the Stefan George-Archiv (Stuttgart), and the Leo Baeck Institute (New York). My thanks go to all three institutions for allowing me to quote unpublished materials in their collections.

[2] I also assume familiarity with basic bibliography regarding the George Circle and consequently limit my documentation to the career of Gertrud Kantorowicz and interrelated details. The best biography (unfortunately short and without documentation) remains Michael Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz: 9. Oktober 1876–19 April 1945," in *Vom Wesen der griechischen Kunst*, by Gertrud Kantorowicz, ed. Michael Landmann (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1961), 93–106. This is reprinted with additions and subtractions in Michael Landmann, *Figuren um Stefan George* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1982), 38–51. Very useful, especially for Kantorowicz's work in art history and for bibliography is Barbara Paul, "Gertrud Kantorowicz (1876–1945): Kunstgeschichte als Lebensentwurf," in *Frauen in den Kulturwissenschaften von Lou Andreas-Salomé bis Hannah Arendt*, ed. Barbara Hahn (Munich: Beck, 1994), 96–109, 310–16. See also the collection of essays on Kantorowicz's relations with Margarete Susman and her last years in Petra Zudrell, ed., *Der abgerissene Dialog: Die intellektuelle Beziehung Gertrud Kantorowicz-Margarete Susman oder Die Schweizer Grenze bei Hohenems als Endpunkt eines Fluchtversuchs* (Innsbruck and Vienna: Studienverlag, 1999). A critical edition of Kantorowicz's collected poetry is: Gertrud Kantorowicz, *Lyrik: Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Philipp Redl (Heidelberg: Manutius, 2010). The lack of attention to Gertrud Kantorowicz's career is regretted by Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 24: "Gertrud Kantorowicz hätte eine einge-

hende Betrachtung verdient." I have been unable to see an essay on Gertrud Kantorowicz by Michael Philipp in *Frauen um Stefan George*, ed. Ute Oelmann and Ulrich Raulff (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010).

[3] From unpublished memoirs written by Ellen Fischer, the second daughter of Gertrud Kantorowicz's older sister, Else Milch. (Constance Sattler, Ellen Fischer's daughter, generously allowed me to quote from her mother's work.)

[4] Gertrud Kantorowicz, "Über den Märchenstil der Malerei und die sienesische Kunst des Quattrocento," in *Beiträge zur Ästhetik und Kunstgeschichte*, ed. Edith Landmann-Kalischer, Gertrud Kühl-Claassen, and Gertrud Kantorowicz (Berlin: Moeser, 1910), 137–254; Henri Bergson, *Schöpferische Entwicklung*, trans. Gertrud Kantorowicz (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1912).

[5] Kantorowicz, *Vom Wesen*. For a list of Kantorowicz's publications, see Paul, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 315–16.

[6] The events are recounted in copious detail by Angela Rammstedt, "'Wir sind des Gottes der begraben stirbt . . .': Gertrud Kantorowicz und der nationalsozialistische Terror," *Simmel Newsletter* 6 (1996): 135–77; basically the same text is reprinted as "Flucht vor der 'Evakuierung': Das Scheitern der Damen Kantorowicz, Hammerschlag und Winter," in Zudrell, *Der abgerissene Dialog*, 11–70.

[7] This corrects Rammstedt, "'Wir sind des Gottes,'" 143, who places Kantorowicz's stay in England and sudden return to Germany in August 1939 on the basis of the recollections of Margarete Susman's son, Erwin von Bendemann, recorded in an interview of ca. 1993. But although my own experience indicates that von Bendemann's memory, even as of interviews made in 2001, was remarkably sharp, in this case he erred about the year. This can be seen from correspondence in my possession sent from Eva Kantorowicz (Gertrud's sister-in-law) in Berlin to her daughter, Vera Pietrkowski (later Peters), then in London, 23 September 1938: "mal hat Tante Gertrud so geliebt über Evi [Eva, Kantorowicz's daughter, then also in England] geschrieben, dass uns das Herz aufgeht"; 6 October 1938: "Tante G. wieder grossartig, nicht? Aber nun hats ein Ende mit den Reisen" [the Munich crisis reached its peak between 20 and 29 September]; 10 October 1938: "Gestern haben wir Trudes Geburtstag gross bei uns gefeiert, 10 Personen zum Tee, Gertrud schön zu Tisch." [Kantorowicz was born on 9 October]; 3 December 1938: "Nachmittags war Tante G. da, die ganz grossartig ist."

[8] The contacts are amply documented in *ZT*: see the index entries. For a supplement, Landmann, *Figuren um Stefan George*, 18–19, telling of a meeting in the autumn of 1909 when George turned to Kantorowicz to comment that a presentation to him of Wolters, "Herrschaft und Dienst," was too lavish.

[9] Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 94.

[10] Kantorowicz's self-abasement in a letter to George of 3 May 1924, StGA, is worth citing in full:

> Verehrter Meister! . . . Schon in den Jahren in Westend war ich mir bewusst dass ich zu irgend einer Zeit zu Ihnen kommen und Rechenschaft über mich und mein Leben ablegen müsste. Ich war damals gebunden

> anders zu scheinen als Schicksal und Wesen in Wahrheit waren — wo nicht durch Verstellung, so durch Verhüllung. Und so sehr ich das Recht zu dieser allen Menschen gegenüber für mich in Anspruch nahm, Ihnen gegenüber galt es nicht. Hier war es nur erträglich durch die feste Absicht wahr zu sein sobald ich dürfe. Ich weiss wohl, dass dieser innere Zwang mir keinerlei Anrecht dazu gibt, Ihre Zeit und Ihre Gedanken für mich in Anspruch zu nehmen — und diese Erkentnis hat mich mit meiner Bitte lange zögern lassen. So lange nur jedoch als ich noch schwankte ob ich auch wirklich frei sei zu sprechen. Nun ich aber beschlossen habe, dass keine Rücksicht mich binden darf, musste ich fragen — durchaus bereit dazu es verehrend hinzunehmen, wenn Sie meine Bitte nicht erfüllen wollen. In tiefer Ergebenheit Gertrud Kantorowicz.

This evidence challenges the assumption of Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 95, that it was George who was responsible for the distancing around the time of the First World War. Exactly how George responded to Kantorowicz's letter of 1924 is uncertain, but her communication to him of 23 February 1926, StGA, indicates that they were then again on cordial terms.

[11] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Edith Landmann, 9 December 1933, StGA: "Geliebte Edith, seit ich die Nachricht erhielt, denke ich unablässig an Sie und die Söhne. Es ist wie das Ende der Welt, und der Fussbreit festen Bodens wankt. Was ist noch, wenn Er nicht lenkt und nach welchem Stern sehen? Und welche Arbeit gibt es noch, welcher Dienst ist noch zu leisten?" Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 96, cites this passage at greater length, without identification of the source.

[12] Letter to Soscha Salz, 9 March 1941, LBI: "ich vergesse wenigstens nicht, dass das Ganze des Lebens zwar tragisch aber kein Jammertal ist. So war es auch bei Bert [Berthe Schlüter] sehr schön. Nachdem Zolck [Zollkram] erledigt war . . . gingen wir auf den Heiligenberg, und nachher las ich ihr die schönsten Dinge aus dem *Stern* und es war deutlich, wie sie aus dem Kern und mit ihrem ganzen Leben verstand." On Berthe Schlüter, see Rammstedt, "'Wir sind des Gottes,'" 167n181.

[13] Interview with Gertrude Meyer (Else Milch's youngest daughter), 26 December 2001.

[14] My database consists of twenty-seven letters to Rudolf Pannwitz (DLA), seventeen to Margarete Susman (DLA and LBI), two to Stefan George (StGA), three to Eva Kantorowicz (in my possession), and one to Edith Landmann (StGA). A few dozen postcards that more evidently do not refer to politics may be added to this number.

[15] Elly Heuss-Knapp, *Bürgerin zweier Welten: Ein Leben in Briefen und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Margarethe Vater (Tübingen: Wunderlich, 1961), 62. On the George Circle in the early twentieth century, see the testimony of Rolf von Hoerschelmann, *Leben ohne Alltag* (Berlin: Wedding Verlag, 1947), 121: "Politisch war der Kreis bis zum Kriege gänzlich uninteressiert."

[16] Anne Schlüter and Annette Kuhn, eds., *Lila Schwarzbuch: Zur Diskriminierung von Frauen in der Wissenschaft* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1986), 41.
[17] Landmann-Kalischer, Kühl-Claassen, Kantorowicz, *Beiträge*.
[18] Paul, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 312–13n18, whose negative findings correspond to my own. Edith Landmann, on the contrary, must have felt a debt to Lange, who had tutored her in the 1890s to help her enter the university: see Michael Landmann, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George: Seine Freundschaft mit Julius und Edith Landmann* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1980), 112.
[19] The relevant passages from Kantorowicz's letter to Susman of 4 July 1907 are cited by Paul, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 102; and Barbara Hahn, "Umrisse einer intellektuellen Beziehung: Margarete Susman und Gertrud Kantorowicz," in Zudrell, *Der abgerissene Dialog*, 149–70; here, 157. Susman was evidently like-minded: see her essay of 1926, "Das Frauenproblem in der gegenwärtigen Welt," in Margarete Susman, *"Das Nah- und Fernsein des Fremden": Essays und Briefe*, ed. Ingeborg Nordmann (Frankfurt: Jüdischer Verlag, 1992), 143–67; here, 143, she wrote: "Hat nicht gerade die europäische Dichtung unendlich Wahreres und Tieferes über die Frau enthüllt als die gesamte Frauenbewegung?"
[20] "Einleitung der Herausgeber," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 3 (1912): iii–viii.
[21] Kurt Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1965), 82.
[22] *Stefan George-Friedrich Gundolf: Briefwechsel*, ed. Robert Boehringer with Georg Peter Landmann (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1962), 228.
[23] Simmel to Rickert, 29 December 1911, in *Buch des Dankes an Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt Gassen and Michael Landmann (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1958), 109. (Simmel quotes Rickert's demand for a strong protest; doubtless the statements about the modern woman were not the only mutual cause for concern.)
[24] Marie Luise Enckendorff [Gertrud Simmel], *Realität und Gesetzlichkeit im Geschlechtsleben* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1910, repr. Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1920), 149. See also the treatment in Marianne Weber, *Lebenserinnerungen* (Bremen: J. Storm, 1948), 376–80, with the conclusion: "Frau Simmel kämpfte von hoher Warte aus für die Selbstmündigkeit der Frau."
[25] *George-Gundolf: Briefwechsel*, ed. Robert Boehringer with Georg Peter Landmann (Munich: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1962), 228n1, 229.
[26] Extremely helpful are Annette Dorgerloh, "Die Malerin Sabine Lepsius und ihr Salon im Berlin der Jahrhundertwende," in *Stadtbild und Frauenleben: Berlin im Spiegel von 16 Frauenporträts*, ed. Henrike Hülsbergen (Berlin: Stapp, 1997), 263–77; and Annette Dorgerloh, "Künstlerehepaare in der Berliner Secession," *Frauen, Kunst, Wissenschaft* 25 (1998): 48–56.
[27] Dorgerloh, "Die Malerin," 267n16.
[28] Dorgerloh, "Künstlerehepaare," 53.

[29] Annette Dorgerloh, "Geniekult und Professionalisierung: Die Selbstinszenierung der Sabine Lepsius," in *Mythen von Autorschaft und Weiblichkeit im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius and Silke Wenk (Marburg: Jonas, 1997), 130–45; here, 143.

[30] Dorgerloh, "Die Malerin," 274. But Dorgerloh's report that a frequent guest at Sabine Lepsius's salon was the women's rights activist Lily Braun must be corrected. As can be seen from Sabine Lepsius, *Ein Berliner Künstlerleben um die Jahrhundertwende* (Munich: Gotthold Müller, 1972), 176, the person in question was Lily Braun's sister.

[31] Sabine Lepsius, "Über Berliner Kultur: Ein Brief von Sabine Lepsius," *März* 1 (1907): 142–53; here, 151.

[32] The unpublished German original of this letter has been generously provided by Robert E. Norton, who quotes the letter in English in Robert E. Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and his Circle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2002), 448, with a reference to the Hildebrandt statements to which Lepsius was implicitly alluding (at 449).

[33] Lepsius, *Künstlerleben*, 218, evidently drawing on diaries that no longer survive.

[34] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Margarete Susman, undated, but certainly Christmas, 1910, LBI. The passage about George is quoted by Michael Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 95 but Landmann misdates it to 1912.

[35] A letter from Gertrud Kantorowicz to Stefan George of 26 October 1911, StGA, indicates that he had been staying in her apartment in Westend (Ebereschenallee 3) while she was away. In a letter to George of 23 October 1926, StGA, Kantorowicz reminisced about how George had stayed in her "small house" in Berlin; this must have been her next dwelling, a carriage house at Ahornallee 12, where she lived between the summer of 1912 and her departure for the war in 1915. The date of her move from Ebereschenallee to Ahornallee appears to be established by a remark of Reinhold Lepsius to George of August 1912, offering a place for George to stay "da das Quartier bei Wolff wegfalle": see *ZT*, 236; the "Quartier bei Wolff" would have been Kantorowicz's apartment at Ebereschenallee, as per Sabine Lepsius, *Künstlerleben*, 183.

[36] See also Gertrud Kantorowicz to Rudolf Pannwitz, 2 August 1914, DLA: "Erster Mobilmachungstag. . . . Die Zeit ist gross, es ist undenkbar, dass wir da klein oder auch nur kleinmütig sein sollten"; Gertrud Kantorowicz to Rudolf Pannwitz 10 August 1914, DLA: "Der Krieg selbst ist reine Grösse"; Gerturd Kantorowicz to Rudolf Pannwitz, 19 August 1914, DLA.

[37] Kantorowicz to Susman, 6 August 1915, LBI. I refrain from presenting full documentation for Kantorowicz's war career. Here, instead, is a passage from the unpublished memoirs of her niece, Ellen Fischer:

> Then came the war and of course she "enrolled" instantly. Probably took a short nursing course, anyhow at some time we used to go to a certain railway overpass near Westend, where we knew that the trains with the

> wounded from the front used to stop and there we met Gertrud K. who travelled with these trains as nurse. . . . Then she took charge of a hospital in Istanbul (then still called Constantinople), which she found being in a filthy state. So, she told me, the first thing she did was washing the windows. Utterly amazed, as I knew she surely had never done that before, I asked her how ever she managed that, she answered: "My dear child, you *can* do what you *have* to do" — and I never forgot that answer, it kind of became a 'leitmotif' for me.

[38] Rammstedt, "'Wir sind des Gottes,'" 162n101.

[39] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Rudolf Pannwitz, 26 November 1918, DLA, in reference to the receipt of his triumphalist book, *Deutschland und Europa* (Nuremberg: Hans Carl, 1918), written before the defeat was clear: "Es ist mir derartig erschütternd, es jetzt zu lesen, in diesem Augenblick, gerade weil dies mein Glaube ist. Und es gestaltet zu sehen, während alles in Trümmern liegt, ist fast zu viel für die Seele."

[40] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Margarete Susman, 15 March 1919, LBI: "Denn selbst wenn man nicht Sozialist ist, aus dem Letzten heraus nicht sein kann, man könnte mit dieser Revolution gehen, für das Jetzt wenigstens, als die gebliebene Möglichkeit, wenn sie aus dem lebte, oder das wesenhaft in ihr [ist], was Du ihr bringst." (The context is encouraging Susman to pursue her leftist activities without worrying about alienating Kantorowicz.)

[41] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Margarete Susman, Heidelberg, 24 November [1927?] DLA: "Und Liebstes mein Kommen. Nein das fürchte ich gar nicht, dass wir uns nicht verstehen können wegen politischer und anschaulicher Fragen. Ich glaube ich weiss viel mehr und viel tiefer wo Du stehst, als Du meinst, und weiss dass wahr und richtig ist, wie Du da stehst."

[42] M. Landmann, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George*, 98. The original letter to Edith Landmann of 16 March 1932 is now in the StGA. On Hermann Kantorowicz, see Imanuel Geiss, introduction to *Gutachten zur Kriegsschuldfrage 1914*, by Hermann Kantorowicz (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1967), 11–27; here, 18: "Jude, Anglophile, Pazifist, Republikaner und Demokrat."

[43] Namely, thirteen to Margarete Susman (DLA and LBI), six to Edith Landmann (StGA), six to Soscha Salz (LBI), four to her daughter Angi (three in StGA; one in my possession) one to Franz and Eva Kantorowicz (in my possession), and one to Ernst Pietrkowski (in my possession). Some of these letters are fragments. This count does not include postcards.

[44] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Margarete Susman [December 1933], LBI (passage also cited by Hahn, "Umrisse," 167n19): "Die Hauptsache Du hast kein Recht zurückzusehen u. Dich zu quälen. Die Gegenwart braucht Dich, Dein Sein, Dein Wort . . . Und vielleicht hast Du noch dies lernen sollen, dass es nur noch das Heut u. das Morgen gibt — denn wenn man am Abgrund steht u. das Schicksal uns treibt, gibt es nichts anderes . . . Mut ist alles." According to information conveyed to me in an interview with Susman's son, Erwin von Bendemann, 21 August 2001,

Susman left Frankfurt in 1933 when she was tipped off that she was about to be arrested; after stopovers in England and Holland she then settled in Zürich.

[45] Robert Boehringer, *Mein Bild von Stefan George* (Munich and Dusseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1951), 94; Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 102.

[46] Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 94; Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 431; Michael Landmann, "Ernst Gundolf," in *Figuren*, 66–79; here, 73. See also Gertrud Kantorowicz to Margarete Susman, 1 May 1937, DLA: "u. dann waren wie immer in Berlin so viele Fragen u. Schicksale, denen man sich nicht entziehen konnte, Hilfe u. Rat so weit man ihn hat, dass ich nicht zur Ruhe kam."

[47] A letter to Margarete Susman, 20 July [1933], DLA, refers to a planned trip to Shoreham (the summer home of Kantorowicz's friend Lucy Ernst-Hoesch) for early August. Although it is uncertain whether that eventuated, Kantorowicz was certainly in London for two days in early December 1933, for the funeral of her brother Franz's son Max Hartwig, as documented in a letter from Gertrud Kantorowicz to Edith Landmann, 9 December 1933, StGA, and another to Margarete Susman, n.d. [December 1933], LBI. Reference to a trip to England and Scotland in August and September of 1934 that evidently did take place appears in a letter to Edith Landmann, 8 August 1934, StGA.

[48] The trip to Palestine from 3 March 1936 until some time after 21 April 1936 is best documented in letters from Eva Kantorowicz to her daughter, Vera Pietrkowski, as well as a letter from an unidentified person to Vera Pietrkowski dated 21 April 1936, all in my possession. The autumn trip to Italy is documented in Käte Ledermann, "Esther in Freundschaft," *Simmel Newsletter* 4 (1994): 78–90, 86, and Eva Kantorowicz to Vera Pietrkowski, 25 October 1936, in the author's possession: "Tante G. kutschiert mit der ungl. verrückten Familie umher, wochenlang Genf, jetzt Neapel." Very likely one of Kantorowicz's missions on this trip was to attend to the funeral of her relative Edmund Pietrkowski in Zürich in late September 1936.

[49] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Margarete Susman, 1 May 1937, DLA, announces an impending trip to Florence in late May. Eva Kantorowicz to Vera and Ernst Pietrkowski, 25 August 1937, refers to Kantorowicz's return after several months in Italy. Kantorowicz's distant cousin Beata Alden told me of Kantorowicz's presence in Settignano in that period. (Interview with Beata Alden, 25 November 2001.)

[50] Rammstedt, "'Wir sind des Gottes,'" 143, citing an interview with Erwin von Bendemann (albeit with the wrong date: see above). Mr. von Bendemann repeated the same to me in an interview of January 2001. On the reliability of von Bendemann's memory, see below.

[51] M. Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 103.

[52] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Soscha Salz, early 1938, LBI: "Also die Gretel, das ist ganz erschütternd . . . Ich habe mich zur Verfügung gestellt . . ." Gertrud Kantorowicz to Soscha Salz, 20 February 1939, LBI, report of Gretel's death: "Ich war viel bei ihr. Die lezten Monate waren wie das Verlöschen einer Flamme." (Note also in same letter: "letzte Woche war ich nicht da, weil ich in Wien war, um

jemanden zu helfen.") Gertrud Kantorowicz to Soscha Salz, 3 January 1941, LBI: "Vielleicht weisst Du von Deiner Mutter [Clara Kantorowicz], dass ich die letzten Monate sozusagen untergetaucht war in der Pflege von Grete Neisser (Pauly) die gemütskrank seit 38 ist, Verfolgungsideen, etc."

[53] Eva Kantorowicz (then in England) to Ernst and Vera Peters, 27 August 1939, in the author's possession: "Wir bangen aber doch um viele Freunde zuhause! . . . Tante Gertrud, die schon lange heraus gekonnt hätte, aber immer noch Andern geholfen hat."

[54] M. Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 103. The reference is to Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 1.12.4–8.

[55] The best writing on "Maria Angela" remains Ledermann, "Esther in Freundschaft." For Kantorowicz's comment on the confirmation, Gertrud Kantorowicz to Erwin von Bendemann, 8 April 1922, DLA: "Voriger Sonntag wurde Angi konfirmiert, und es war so schön u. feierlich, dass wir alle ganz glücklich darüber waren."

[56] My knowledge of the Christmas 1935 celebration at the home of Franz Kantorowicz comes from a telephone interview with Eva Peters Hunting, 21 November 2001. A telling irony appears in a letter of 22 December 1938 from Eva Kantorowicz to her daughter (in the author's possession). First she reports: "Weihnachten is Amutti und Tante Agnes bei uns, das heisst Heiligabend. Ich mache eine Gans und Mohnpielen," and then she reports: "Ab 1.1. also Sara!"

[57] The baptism of all five of Else Milch's children is reported in an unpublished memoir by her youngest daughter, Gertrude ("Gertrude's Life Story"), in the author's possession [3]; the author adds: "the expression 'Jude' (Jew in German) was banned from our conversations; if somebody had to mention the word, it was 'Juif' in French." Else Milch's granddaughter, Constance Sattler, informed me in an interview of 14 December 2001 that the two eldest Milch girls once met a man on the street who told them that they were "nice little Jewish girls"; when they got home they asked: "What's Jewish?"

[58] Sabine Lepsius to Reinhold Lepsius, 1 November 1910, DLA: "Gestern Abend Yom Kippur oder Versöhnungsfest bei Gertrud Kant. mit St. George. Reizender Abend."

[59] The references to Rabbi Nachman and the Zaddik appear in a letter to Margarete Susman, ca. December 1919, DLA. The saying of the Zaddik is cited by M. Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 97.

[60] Gertrud Kantorowicz, review of *Die Frauen der Romantik*, by Margarete Susman, *Der Morgen* 6 (1930): 207–9. I am most grateful to Eckhart Grünewald for calling this hitherto unnoticed review to my attention.

[61] Hahn, "Umrisse," 167, 168, cites a letter to Margarete Susman of April 1934 which refers to the "people of King David" [Gertrud Kantorowicz was uncomfortable with saying "we Jews"] and draws on the wisdom of the Book of Job, and a letter of July 1938 to Susman which shows that Kantorowicz was studying Hebrew and pondering a passage from Isaiah. Hahn wishes to make Kantorowicz's letter of 1938 the last extant one she wrote, but this is incorrect.

[62] Gert Pauly [it is noteworthy that Kantorowicz continued to use her George Circle pseudonym], "Die Stimme spricht von Karl Wolfskehl," *Schweizer Annalen* 36 (1936): 65–66: "Was geschehen ist, war Schicksal. Aber den Bund zwischen dem Gefährten und dem Meister hat auch das Schicksal nicht zerbrechen können. Und vielleicht ist es eine letzte Besiegelung dieses Bundes, dass Wolfskehls Gedichte, die ohne die Gestalt Georges nicht wären was sie sind, einem ganzen Volke zur rechten Stunde zu Stimme und Stern werden konnten — so wie es auch ein tröstlicher Gedanke sein mag, dass der erste wirklich grosse und neue Dichter, der dem 'Kreise' erwächst, ein deutscher Jude ist."

[63] Ledermann, "Esther in Freundschaft," 83–85.

[64] Angela Kantorowicz to Edith Landmann, [ca. 20 July 1933], StGA. She continued: "[M]an muss nur die Kraft haben dies Wirkliche festzuhalten u. nicht nachzulassen im Alltag. Aber auch da ist Freude auf das u. die Arbeit." Margarete Susman's son, Erwin von Bendemann, independently remembers in an interview with the author, 19 January 2001, Angi saying to him before her departure: "ist es nicht was Wunderbares ein Volk zu haben?" (I take this to be powerful testimony to the nonagenarian Von Bendemann's sharp memory.)

[65] Ellen Fischer, "Angi," unpublished memoirs, 4.

[66] Fischer, "Angi"; Ledermann, "Esther in Feundschaft," 85.

[67] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Angela Kantorowicz, 26 December 1933, in the author's possession.

[68] Fischer, "Angi," unpublished memoirs, 4.

[69] A detailed account is provided by Rammstedt, "'Wir sind des Gottes,'" 145–46.

[70] "Notizen von Artur Sommer über die Familie Kantorowicz — erhalten von E. Salin am 15.2.64," StGA, [3].

[71] For detailed information on Erhard Milch, see Rammstedt, "'Wir sind des Gottes,'" 162n101, who reports that after Milch's death it was made known that his gentile mother actually conceived him out of wedlock by a gentile man. Nevertheless Artur Sommer writes in his notes of 1964, StGA [1], in reference to Kantorowicz's sister, Else Milch that "Generaloberst Milch . . . nachdem er von Göring als Arier proklamiert war, mit seinen Verwandten anständig zusammenhielt." Else Milch's daughter, Gertrude Meyer, told me in an interview of 26 December 2001 that Milch's father, Anton Milch, was a distant relative and really the father; when she saw a picture of him she noticed a resemblance to her own father. According to Frau Meyer, Goering forced Milch to say that his mother had sired him by a gentile out of wedlock because he wanted to retain Milch in his service, especially because Milch knew many things that Goering did not want publicized. See also Victor Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten* (Berlin: Spiegel Verlag, 1995), vol. 1, 317, entry for 18 October 1936: "Marta berichtet von dem Fliegergeneral Milch, der eine arische Mutter und einen jüdischen Vater habe: er gebe an, seine Mutter habe ihn im Ehebruch von einem Arier empfangen."

[72] On the subject of "Aryanization" procedures in the Third Reich, see Eric Ehrenreich, *The Nazi Ancestral Proof* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2007). There

was indeed a procedure of obtaining an "Abstammungsbescheid" by means of a civil office that underwent several name changes, the last of which was "Reichssippenamt." (But the SS would not have been involved in this.) See also Peter Hoffmann, *Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg und seine Brüder* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1992), 158–59, referring to Alexander von Stauffenberg's Jewish wife and her siblings who were all officially "gleichgestellt" as Aryans, albeit in 1944.

[73] M. Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 102.

[74] Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 96–97: "Eine 'Instinktheilige,' kannte sie keine Prinzipien und handelte oft sogar gegen das allgemein Geltende"; 102: "[Mut] der oft an Tollkühnheit grenzte." In the latter context Landmann reports that during the times of persecution Kantorowicz checked into hotels under false names.

[75] Gertrud Kantorowicz to Salz, 9 March 1941, LBI. Erwin von Bendemann reported to me a revealing anecdote in an interview, 19 January 2001, concerning his statement that "she went too far with some things." Kantorowicz lived in London during the thirties for a while with her friend Lucy Ernst-Hoesch. The latter "had loads of money but was very tight with her housekeeper." So once when Lucy was absent Gertrud took a twenty-pound note from Lucy's purse and handed it to her. When von Bendemann told his mother Margarete Susman about this she strongly disapproved: "this was too much."

[76] Vagueness reigns as to the identity of these likely connections. According to Gertrude Meyer, Kantorowicz's cousin Ruth Wolff was friends with Kurt von Schleicher, but he of course was murdered in 1934; according to the same source, Kantorowicz's friend Gudrun Bucher was a cousin of Rudolf Hess, but Kantorowicz and Bucher do not appear to have been close during the thirties. M. Landmann, *Figuren um Stefan George*, 102, refers without elaboration to "Beziehungen zur Gestapo," and this may be confirmed by his report that his mother left Berlin shortly before Kristallnacht because she learned that she was high on an arrest list, as well as the fact that Kantorowicz remained in Berlin and was not arrested. (For Landmann on his mother, see his essay "Renata von Scheliha," in *Figuren um Stefan George*, 105–14; here, 106.) If there were Gestapo connections there may also have been others: Erwin von Bendemann, thinks it likely that Gertrud retained a tie to an army officer whom she had tended while a nurse in Constantinople in the First World War.

[77] Lepsius, *Ein Berliner Künstlerleben*, 183: "Ihre eigene Richtlinie aber war der griechische Geist. Was anderen Menschen die Bibel, das waren ihr die grossen griechischen Tragödien, die sie immer im Originaltext las." Gertrud Kantorowicz to Soscha Salz, 3 January 1941, LBI: "In meiner Griechenarbeit arbeite ich auch weiter, u. das Lesen griech. Dichtung ist immer wieder der Brunnen des Lebens."

[78] Landmann, "Gertrud Kantorowicz," 105. I cite Euripides, *Medea*, transl. John Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 101.

[79] In the poem "Ruhr: Clärchen 28./29. Nov. 1942," in G. Kantorowicz, *Vom Wesen der griechischen Kunst*, 107.

[80] Landmann, *Figuren um Stefan George*, 112–13: "Sie [R. von Scheliha] gehört — wie Gertrud Kantorowicz, wie Wolfgang Frommel — zu den Wenigen, die durch ihr Dasein beweisen, dass sich von George her nicht nur ästhetische Kultur und historische Bildung begründete, sondern kompromissloses Wagnis im Geschick der Zeit."

II: Poetry, Prophecy, Publics

4: The Poet as Idol: Friedrich Gundolf on Rilke and Poetic Leadership

Rüdiger Görner

WHATEVER ORGANIZES ITSELF in the shape of a circle, or ring, signals that it intends to contradict the idea of linear progression or evolutionary development. In this context, movement only seems to serve the purpose of completing circles, and the obvious suggestion or implication is that one can, at least potentially, come full circle at any time. Furthermore, forming circles reflects an attempt of kindred spirits to share a certain set of values and beliefs. By the same token, the circle should also be seen as an answer to the ever-fragmenting experience of modernity.

The ring as a dominant poetic motif, or the circle as a particular feature of artistic composition, has in turn often assumed a social, even political, role. This applied to the Romantic era as much as to Wagnerianism and, of course, the George Circle. To date, aesthetic theory has still not explored sufficiently what it means to adhere to the circle principle, both as a pattern of composition and structure of reception.

Stefan George had the vision of a life through the circle of his appointed followers, for the sake of establishing a poetocracy, as it were, with himself as its first mandarin and the "pure" word as its actual ruler. Small wonder that Georg Lukács, among others, was to criticize this circle as a problematic expression of both untimely and inappropriate "Orphic mysticism."[1]

However, in his Circle, George assumed the role of the untouchable *praeceptor verborum*, the infallible judge of what was pure and what was impure art. Inevitably, a sense of exaggerated subjectivity prevailed both in George's literary judgment and his own poetry. But this subjectivity served a particular purpose, as Eugen Gottlob Winkler quite rightly observed in his illuminating piece "Die Gestalt Stefan Georges in unserer Zeit," written and published in 1936, shortly before he committed suicide.[2] Winkler argued that George's subjectivity was the expression of a secular priest who was preaching the transubstantiation of the *Ich*. What remained was an omnipresent gesture that could direct others — members of the Circle, for example — even if they were one day dismissed as heretics. The essence of Winkler's argument amounts to what could be referred to as George's fundamental aestheticism rather than what Stefan Breuer was to call the poet's aesthetic fundamentalism.[3]

The members of the George Circle were appointed to act as custodians of their self-imposed solitude. This did not prevent some of them from seeking public acclaim by adopting the stance of the Master, sometimes in a curious fashion that amounted to travesty. Ludwig Derleth, for instance, assumed the role of a missionary in Munich who believed Buddha, Alexander the Great, and Napoleon to have been amongst his ancestors. It is not surprising that Thomas Mann could not help satirizing Derleth and his séances, whose Munich high society audience included Mann's own future mother-in-law. His novella *Beim Propheten* (1904) illustrates not only the absurdity of intellectual pretence, but also the poor judgment of a society that falls for such grotesque practices.

By 1924, however, Thomas Mann, when reviewing the spectacular reception of Oswald Spengler's diagnosis of the state of cultural affairs, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918), described quite another effect of George's mythology of the arts upon members of his Circle and intellectual trends of his time. Referring to Ernst Bertram's study of Nietzsche and Friedrich Gundolf's *Goethe*, Thomas Mann noticed a distinct interest among the reading public in "intellektuale Romane." He spoke of

> eine Verschmelzung der kritischen und dichterischen Sphäre, inauguriert schon durch unsere Romantiker, mächtig gefördert durch das Phänomen von Nietzsche's Erkenntnislyrik . . . ein Prozeß, der die Grenze von Wissenschaft und Kunst verwischt, den Gedanken erlebnishaft durchblutet, die Gestalt vergeistigt.[4]

This amalgamation of scholarly insight and its artistic expression was characteristic of Gundolf's approach to literature in particular, first demonstrated in his study *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* (1911). With this legendary breakthrough, Gundolf was on his way to becoming an artist in literary studies, but he continued to conceive of *Literaturwissenschaft* as a genuine *Wissenschaft*, rather than treating it as a mere form of art. It was exactly this scientific approach to aesthetic matters that George rejected. "Von mir aus führt kein Weg zur Wissenschaft," he was reported to have proclaimed during a conversation with Edgar Salin and Gundolf in June 1920.[5] It is probably fair to say that this implied a rejection of the kind of "wertfreie Wissenschaft" proclaimed by Max Weber, for there is no doubt that George encouraged the pursuit of "Wissenschaft" especially in the field of historiography. This form of "Wissenschaft" relied on an implicit methodology and meticulous research that would, however, not be presented as such, rather serving as a tacit precondition for stylistically flourishing presentations.[6]

In his own monograph on George, published in the same year, Gundolf makes the point that the author of *Der Stern des Bundes* (1914) had transformed scientific insight into life, into a cosmological experience of the unity between the individual and his place in time that conditioned

and determined George's very *Gestalt*.[7] This rather unabashed accolade notwithstanding, Gundolf had already fallen out with George at this point, as evidenced by his decision to publish a book, in 1922, on Heinrich von Kleist, who did not belong to George's pantheon of poets that included Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe. Gundolf's deviation from George's sacred path to poetic elucidation, in conjunction with his decision to marry and to dedicate his book on Kleist to his fiancée, made the rift between him and the Master irreparable.

Another poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, as will be argued here, played a complex but crucial role in this process of alienation. Rilke's first encounter with George is well-known: it took place in December 1897, on the occasion of a soirée in the house of the painter Reinhold Lepsius, with Lou Andreas-Salomé, Georg Simmel and Fritz Mauthner among the guests. The devout, but at the same time self-assured, letter that Rilke subsequently sent to George is equally well-known: it represented his application for admission to the circle of distinguished friends handpicked by the poet and for participation in the *Blätter für die Kunst*. It is also known that Rilke and George met again, by coincidence, in the Boboli Gardens of Florence, where George advised Rilke to strive for "geduldige Arbeit . . ., die von außen nichts erwartet."[8] After this encounter, Rilke remained interested in the activities of the George Circle and those of George in particular, albeit in a more detached manner. He summarized his views on George in an astute remark to the Princess von Thurn und Taxis in April 1915:

> [E]s scheint z.B., als ob es irgendwie der Grundsatz, die Lehre der Leute um Stefan George sei, nichts zu erleben, was nicht vom inneren Mythus aus seine Beleuchtung und Deutung empfängt: innen mythisch zu sein, die täglich widerfahrenden Dinge im Sinn ihrer eigentlich göttlichen Abstammung aufzunehmen, vielleicht ist dieses das besondere Geheimnis des Kreises um Stefan George (und kein ästhetisches!) — (dem ja auch Kassner näher gekommen ist).[9]

The idea of the inner myth as a precondition of and parameter for the perception of life sheds a fascinating light on the actual meaning of "orphic mysticism." It is of course highly ironic that it was Rilke, the poet who was to do most for the reinterpretation of the Orphic myth in modern poetry, notably with his *Sonette an Orpheus* (1923), that remained virtually unacknowledged by George. And it is symptomatic that the two most prominent heretics of the Circle, Friedrich Gundolf and Max Kommerell, in due course came to recognize the significance of Rilke's works.

Rilke, by contrast, was an early admirer of Gundolf's *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist*, of some of his poems, which he even copied for the Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis, as well as his monograph on Goethe. But Rilke appears to have been slightly more critical of Gundolf's George

monograph, which contained a whole number of paragraphs that were directed against the author of the *Stundenbuch* (1905).[10] The most intriguing of Rilke's connections to Gundolf, however, was an indirect one. Late in the summer of 1923, Rilke met a Dr. Elisabeth Salomon in the rehabilitation center of Schöneck on Lake Lucerne, who left a deep impression upon him. Unbeknownst to Rilke, Elisabeth Salomon was one of the main reasons for George's break with Gundolf, who eventually married her in 1926, after some ten years of emotionally strained courtship. In lengthy discussions, Rilke explained to Elisabeth his favorite topic at the time — the position of women left by their beloved, discussing with her the cases of Gaspara Stampa and Marianna Alcoforado in order to demonstrate that men were incapable of genuine love.[11] Ironically enough, Elisabeth in those years was experiencing just the opposite with Friedrich Gundolf, who loved and defended her against everyone and everything.[12]

One result of Rilke's encounter with Gundolf's fiancée Elisabeth Salomon were the poems "Ex Voto" and "Tränenkrüglein," which Rilke published in 1924 in the *Insel-Almanach* periodical, bearing the dedication "für E.S."[13] The latter poem was to figure prominently at the end of Gundolf's last work, his essayistic study *Rainer Maria Rilke*, which he delivered as a lecture in June 1931, one month before he died. In this lecture, Gundolf referred to Rilke's "Tränenkrüglein," with surprising distance, as a poem "an eine Frau" full of "ergreifende Gleichnisse."[14]

A letter from Gundolf to Elisabeth Salomon belies this apparent nonchalance. In the letter, dated 1 March 1924, he gave her to understand that he was genuinely concerned about her relation to Rilke. His assessment of the literary value of those poems, as a consequence, was conditioned by prejudice, if not jealousy:

> Die Rilkegedichte hab ich dir geschickt . . . sehr gut sind sie nicht und bei seiner Art kann man auch nichts entnehmen von der Madonna die er nicht anbetet . . .
> Wenn sie an dich sind, hat er auch seinen Hexenschuss von dir weg . . . Du mußt es ja am besten wissen, Liebstes, ob er dich so unglücklich liebt. Der "Gang nach der Kapelle" wäre das einzige Konkrete wonach du feststellen könntest ob du gemeint bist. Hast du ihm denn deine Adresse gegeben, so daß er dir schreiben könnte. Es kommt mir vor, als seien diese Verse Antwort an jemanden der ihm nicht geantwortet.[15]

Evidently, Gundolf was so irritated by these two poems that he investigated their biographical context, an approach he usually avoided as a matter of principle.

What was it, then, that eventually made Gundolf turn to Rilke, to a poet whose 1916 lectures on Luther he wad once believed to have attended in Heidelberg?[16] Was Gundolf's text a mere *pièce d'occasion*? Did

it confirm his views on poetry, or revise his stance on the poet as a secular saint or "Führer," in Max Kommerell's sense of the word?[17] And finally, are we justified in referring to this text as an integral part of Gundolf's intellectual legacy, or did it simply happen to be his last piece of work?

One striking feature of Gundolf's approach to Rilke is that he reassesses some of his works that were most blatantly in opposition to George's aesthetics. Gundolf in his lecture turned emphatically to the early Rilke and, with the exception of a brief allusion to *Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910) and a few references to the *Dingdichtung*, he disregarded most of the mature poetic works.[18] Hence, he discusses neither the *Duineser Elegien* (1922), nor the *Sonette an Orpheus*. The late Rilke is represented only by "Tränenkrüglein." Yet Gundolf decided not to interpret, only to cite it; he referred to it as a mere expression of the poet's "schöpferisches Duldertum," which enabled him to receive the infinite in the shape of a miniscule object. He made no reference to the fact that this poem belonged to Rilke's last *Dinggedichte*; no mention of the poem's striking paradox that this small mug contains a substance — tears — that represents, ultimately, emptiness and void suffering. From Gundolf's point of view, however, the poem's message may already have been too close to home at this late stage of his life.

Before looking at Gundolf's actual comments on Rilke, we should examine his poetological introduction and the way in which he defined his aesthetic parameters. The opening sentence clarifies the very basis of Gundolf's deliberations: George and Rilke must be mentioned in but one breath, even if their respective works seem to constitute alternative approaches to poetry. According to Gundolf and other, more distant observers of the George Circle, such as Hans Carossa, both poets represented a new phase in German poetry, for both could equally rely on what Gundolf called "tönende Erleuchtung" (*R*, 7).

It is this "resounding illumination," or perhaps poetic elucidation, of life and its transcending forces that Gundolf saw as George's and Rilke's main contribution to modern poetry. But whilst George's poetry, according to Gundolf, reverberated with the song of human dignity in the seamless universe, Rilke's "Kunst der Verzauberung" addressed the discrepancy between profanity and the sublime:

> Er [Rilke] hat nicht nur in seine Prosa, sondern in seine Verse unbefangen die Zeichen des genauen Zeitalters hereingeholt — Fremdworte, welche die eigentlichen Romantiker von Novalis bis in unsere Tage als prosaisch den Zeitungen überlassen hätten, geschichtliche, kunsthistorische oder Fachausdrücke, die noch von keiner Ewigkeit oder Vorwelt verklärt erschienen. (*R*, 9–10)

But this range of Rilke's language, from the sublime to the ordinary, gives ample account of what Gundolf called the poet's "Sprach-

Hingerissenheit" (*R*, 17). Rilke's use of language was seismographic, and acutely open to its perpetual changes. He was enraptured by language and as such was, in Gundolf's view, a disciple of Nietzsche, to whom he referred as "der weiche Härteprediger, der Asket des Mitleids" (*R*, 19).

From Gundolf's perspective, Rilke's approach to poetry signified the blurring of the boundary between verse and prose. Due to his "dinggesättigte[s] Gedächtnis" (*R*, 27), Rilke was able to encompass the entire experience of modern life. His sharp perception of objects was never drowned by mania, or by the ecstasy of inspiration. Even so, Gundolf was quick to add, Rilke succeeded in speaking with "Gott und Tod und Schweigen und Liebe" in his very own language.

In this context, Gundolf puts much emphasis on the meaning of Rilke's handling of rhyme and metre, but he does so not without some irony: "Rilkes Reimkraft ist so reich und so überschwänglich leicht, daß man oft meint, er reime aus Höflichkeit gegen die noch unausgesprochenen Worte" (*R*, 29). There seems to be a more essential significance of rhyme, though. Gundolf suggests that in the *Stundenbuch*, for example, Rilke was engaged in a "Reimgespräch mit dem großen Alten" (*R*, 31), and that rhyme was a spiritual dimension in his poetry.

Gundolf's most original contributions to the debate on the legacy of Rilke's works, however, are his reflections on the poet's use of analogy. Rilke's art of comparison is seen by Gundolf as a virtue and a vice; moreover, it has tragic undertones:

> Die Gleichnissprache Rilkes bedeutet die Aktivierung alles Erscheinenden vom Ungeziefer bis zum Sternenhimmel, von Salonflittern bis zur Dornenkrone, weil das Ich so schlechthin abhängig, passiv, einlässig und durchlässig geworden ist, daß es keinem Windeshauch widerstehen will und darf. Jedes Stäubchen muß es sich einverwandeln, jeder Druck der Luft macht solche Dulder zum Spiel, zum Saitenspiel. (*R*, 38)

But what does it mean — to activate all appearances? Gundolf seems to suggest that the poet can, by way of lyrical evocation, challenge and realize the entire potential of things, including the comprehension of the silences between words and objects. At the same time, Gundolf suggested that Rilke's preference for analogy, and especially for the butterfly, illustrated the extent of his "flatternde Psyche," his sheer playfulness and, consequently, his lack of gravitas and expression of will. This is a late echo of what he had discussed in his study on George when, with implicit reference to Rilke, Gundolf spoke of some contemporary poets who had excelled in "zügelloser Hingabe an jedes äußere oder innere Anders."[19]

Gundolf, thus, interprets Rilke as a poet of diastolic quality, whose verse was loose and "relaxed," as it were, whilst George represented systolic tension and utmost concentration. Gundolf's characterization of Rilke's

poetry, including his observation that the poet incorporated all possible experiences in his verse, in fact, hints at the very reasons why Rilke is considered a truly "modern" poet today. "Seelen wie Rilke," Gundolf argued, "saugen den Abgrund ihres entlassenen, zerrissenen, alldurchbohrten Ich in jedes festere, schwerere, stärkere Begebnis und werden seine Stimme" (*R*, 39).

Gundolf's mentioning of the butterfly as a key motif in Rilke's poetry, as well as the poet's apparent diastolic qualities, refer the reader to Goethe, with his pertinent use of the butterfly as a poetic symbol of metamorphosis and his preference for describing the rhythm of life and development in terms of *systolē* and *diastolē*, meaning the contracting and releasing of forces. But by attributing diastolic force to Rilke and the systolic effect to George, Gundolf implied that the latter was not the sole heir to Goethe.

The concluding sentence of Gundolf's discussion of Rilke deserves particular attention: "Sein schmerzhaftes Leben dauert unter uns und wohl noch unter fernen Enkeln, auch ohne Heiligenbild und ohne ein Reich seines Willens, wie er selbst geweissagt als ein 'großer Gesang'" (*R*, 40). Compared with most of the previous sections, the change of tone is unmistakable here. Gundolf at last seems prepared to acknowledge both Rilke's ability to endure unspeakable suffering and the lasting impact of his "Gesang." In this final sentence, in fact, Gundolf goes even further than that. He concedes that there was no need for Rilke to create his own "Heiligenbild"; and even the poet's supposed lack of will that Gundolf had previously criticized, is now presented, surprisingly, as an asset. Both of these attributes — self-glorification and even self-sanctification, as well as the creation of a realm of the will — belonged quite evidently to the sphere of Stefan George. Yet Rilke's "großer Gesang" made these attributes redundant. His last sentence indicates, or so it seems, that Gundolf was on his way to reassessing Rilke's work, even at the expense of George's.

Gundolf was not the only member of the George Circle to arrive at such a reassessment. There is the more spectacular case of the artist and book-illustrator Melchior Lechter, a friend of Gundolf and an ardent admirer of Elisabeth Salomon. Lechter's conversion to Rilke is likely to have occurred at about the same time that Gundolf was working on his 1931 lecture. In Lechter's letters to the Gundolfs, however, there is no mention of Rilke, except for Lechter's note to Elisabeth, dated 7 August 1931, in which he appears extremely upset by Anton Kippenberg's refusal to posthumously publish Gundolf's Rilke lecture with his publishing house, Insel Verlag. (Kippenberg seemed to disapprove of Gundolf's explicit references to the early stages of Rilke's career as well as his frequent references to George.) But no one else of the former George Circle, not even Max Kommerell, would go as far as Lechter in his eventual worshipping of Rilke, which led him to write an essay on the "Mysterium der

Rilkeschen Dichtersprache" in September 1937, only a month before he died in Raron. He was buried close to Rilke's grave.[20]

The most substantial, if slightly bizarre, response Gundolf received on his Rilke lecture came from his friend Karl Wolfskehl, whose letter to Gundolf of 21 March 1931 is a key document of the Rilke reception in the Circle. Wolfskehl could not bring himself to accept Gundolf's proposition that Rilke should be regarded as the "Gegenpol" to George. For Wolfskehl, Rilke's poetry represented "die ganz und gar zerlöste Späte" and amounted to little more than "Gesumme." He quoted a dictum attributed to George: "Es ist nichts in Rilke, was nicht in Hofmannsthal echter wäre." When it came to comparing Rilke to George, Wolfskehl's judgement was dogmatic: "Neben George aber gibt es Hofmannsthal und das andere bis zum Lechter- und Laienliebling Rilke n'existe pas!"[21] Wolfskehl's comments indicate how much Gundolf had risked, as critic, fellow poet, and George's former *Meisterschüler*, by praising certain aspects of Rilke's poetic legacy.

Elisabeth Gundolf came to a more balanced judgment some ten years later. In her aforementioned reflections on Rilke and George she pointed out that, despite obvious differences, the two poets had much in common:

> So groß der Unterschied [zwischen beiden Dichtern] sein mag, das Gemeinsame ist mindestens ebenso sichtbar, und hier vor allem ihre Stellung gegenüber den Mächten, die das öffentliche Leben ihres Zeitalters beherrschten: Kapital, Maschine, Militär. Beide waren bewußt abgewandt von diesen Mächten, und sie hielten sich nach Möglichkeit fern von den Personen, die sie vertraten. Die Gesinnung der beiden Dichter war die Antithese zu der Gesinnung ihres Tags, die ihr Glaubensbekenntnis von Markt, Plakat und Massen-Erfolg bezog.[22]

This comment of 1944 reflects Elisabeth Gundolf's particular understanding of poetic leadership that included the notion of the poet leading his readers away from politics and other contemporary obsessions. This belief that poetry was to contribute to the formation of a counter-world, echoes and continues a long tradition amongst German intellectuals who tended to overestimate, if not overburden, the power of aesthetic culture.

The idolization of the poet as *vates*, that is seer and prophet, was part and parcel of Gundolf's understanding of George and, subsequently, informed his reading of Rilke. The very beginning of his lecture on Rilke provides ample evidence of this:

> Unter den deutschen Dichtern, die als Verkünder der Lebenskräfte vermöge des Zauberworts unsere Jugend beschwingt haben — ohne andere Zwecke und Mittel als eben ihre Gabe der tönenden Erleuchtung oder des offenbaren Geheimnisses — sind heute zwei schon legendär und verbildlicht: Stefan George und Rainer Maria Rilke. (*R*, 1)

As we have seen, however, at the end of his lecture, Gundolf, George's former chief disciple, emphasized the success of "Gesang" as the only plausible criterion and legitimization for spiritual guidance. There can be little doubt that Gundolf, the poet-critic and scholar, had once aspired to create such a "Gesang" himself. In a sense, the rhapsodic style of his scholarship amounted to just that. Or rather, it was Gundolf's substitute for the "große Gesang" that he never completed.

Notes

[1] Georg Lukács, "Hölderlins *Hyperion*" [1934], in Georg Lukács, *Goethe und seine Zeit* (Bern: A. Francke Verlag, 1947), 110–26.

[2] Eugen Gottlob Winkler, *Die Dauer der Dinge: Dichtungen, Essays, Briefe*, ed. Heinz Piontek (Munich: Schneekluth, 1985), 188–201.

[3] See Stefan Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus: Stefan George und der deutsche Antimodernismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995).

[4] Thomas Mann, *Gesammelte Werke in dreizehn Bänden*, vol. 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1990), 173.

[5] Quoted in Ernst Osterkamp, "Friedrich Gundolf (1830–193l)," in *Wissenschaftgeschichte der Germanistik in Portäts*, ed. Christoph König, Hans-Harald Müller and Werner Röcke (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 171.

[6] On the changing attitudes towards and conceptions of *Wissenschaft* in the George Circle, see Bernhard Böschenstein, Jürgen Egyptien, Bertram Schefold, and Wolfgang Graf Vitzthum, eds., *Wissenschaftler im George-Kreis: Die Welt des Dichters und der Beruf der Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005).

[7] See Wolfgang Braungart, "Gundolfs George," *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift* 43 (1993): 417–42.

[8] Rilke's letter to Friedrich von Oppeln-Bronikowski, 29 May 1907, in Rainer Maria Rilke, *Gesammelte Briefe*, vol. 1, ed. Ruth Sieber-Rilke and Carl Sieber (Leipzig: Insel Verlag: 1930), 3, 255.

[9] *Rilke und Marie von Thurn und Taxis: Briefwechsel*, ed. Ernst Zinn (Zurich and Wiesbaden: Niehans & Rokitansky, 1951), 417–18.

[10] For further reference, see Joachim W. Storck, "Rilke, Wolfskehl, Gundolf," *Blätter der Rilke-Gesellschaft* 14 (1987): 119–40, esp. 130.

[11] This account was given by Elisabeth Gundolf in her 1944 Oxford lecture on "Meine Begegnung mit Rainer Maria Rilke und Stefan George," in *Gundolf Briefe*, new edition, ed. Lothar Helbing and Claus Victor Bock (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1965), 36.

[12] For detailed reference, see Lothar Helbing, preface to *Stefan George: Zwei Vorträge*, by Elisabeth Gundolf (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1965), 5–33.

[13] Rainer Maria Rilke, *Werke*, ed. Manfred Engel, Ulrich Fülleborn, Horst Nalewski, August Stahl, vol. 2, *Gedichte 1910 bis 1926* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1996), 292. See commentary, 791–92.

[14] Friedrich Gundolf, *Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. Elisabeth Gundolf (Vienna: Johannes-Verlag, 1937), 5. Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *R* and page number.
[15] Friedrich Gundolf to Elisabeth Salamon, 1 March 1924, Gundolf Collection, Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach. The author is grateful to Ulrich von Bülow for having granted him the permission to quote this extract. This is very much in line with Gundolf's otherwise ambivalent attitude towards Elisabeth's independence. In her extensive article on Gundolf and Salomon that, surprisingly, completely ignores the Rilke connection, Ann Goldberg points out that he "embraced" it on the one hand but, on the other hand, "increasingly agonized over it": see Ann Goldberg, "The Black Jew with the Blond Heart: Friedrich Gundolf, Elisabeth Salomon, and Conservative Bohemianism in Weimar Germany," *The Journal of Modern History* 79 (June 2007): 306–34; here, 326.
[16] See Gundolf's letter to Edgar Salin, May 1916, in Helbing and Bock, *Gundolf Briefe*, 152.
[17] See Max Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik: Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, Hölderlin* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1928).
[18] Gundolf, *Rilke*, 26 (*Malte*); 12, 27, 36 (*Dinggedichte*).
[19] Friedrich Gundolf, *George* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1920), 16. For detailed reference, see Eudo C. Mason, "Rilke und Stefan George," in *Exzentrische Bahnen: Studien zum Dichterbewußtsein der Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 205–49.
[20] Ernst Osterkamp, "Das Geheime Deutschland am Pazifik: Dokumente zum George-Kreis; der Nachlaß des Malers und Buchkünstlers Melchior Lechter am Getty Research Institute," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 September 2000.
[21] Karl und Hanna Wolfskehl, *Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Gundolf, 1899–1931,* ed. Karlhans Kluncker, vol. 11, *Publications of the Institute of Germanic Studies* 24 (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1977), 237–38.
[22] Elisabeth Gundolf, "Meine Begegnung," 41.

5: Kingdom of the Spirit: The Secret Germany in Stefan George's Later Poems

Ray Ockenden

My title indicates a concern to offer some kind of counterweight to the sociological, historical and biographical considerations with which this volume is largely concerned. At the start of her magisterial work on the George Circle, Carola Groppe noted: "Seit den achtziger Jahren ist das Interesse an George und vor allem an seinem Kreis wieder gestiegen . . . Georges Lyrik wird weniger wichtig, entscheidend werden sozial- und kulturhistorische Fragestellungen; das Interesse reicht zudem weit über die Fachgrenze der Germanistik hinaus."[1]

This tendency has notably increased since the publication of her book, as is reflected in publications concerning the scholarly works that arose from the George Circle, or investigating its attitude towards the Jews or towards *das schöne Leben*; of all the space devoted to considerations of George's works from *Der Siebente Ring* (1907) onwards, and his influence during that period, less than half has been concerned with his poetry.[2]

George's poetry is certainly still referred to, but the quotation of brief excerpts is often designed to bolster one-sided argument; even when it receives more coverage, as in the published lectures by Manfred Frank,[3] the discussion of the poems is clearly merely ancillary to the development of, in this case, an all-too-familiar set of arguments. Tendentious excerpting and strange interpretations take their place in Frank's work alongside judgments that may cause mild surprise in some readers, such as the characterization of "Rudolf" Boehringer as a "wahrer Fanatiker des Irrationalen."[4]

Of particular interest, no doubt inevitably, has been the continuing thorny question of Stefan George's relations to National Socialism: gone are the days when a judgment from Heinrich Böll: "Ich las Stefan George, den ich keinen Augenblick lang für einen Nazi hielt,"[5] or a firm scholarly conclusion such as "Sowenig wie Nietzsche war George ein Vorläufer des Nationalsozialismus,"[6] could stem the tide of contrary argument. Currently, it seems, historical hindsight, and especially perspectives unavoidably shaped by the Holocaust, can hamper access to the actual historical context

of concepts and ideas; at the same time, it seems problematic to place a text back into its historical context and then judge it by the standards of a quite different historical era — namely, our own. Certainly, if we cannot rescue works of literature into the present day, if they are to remain entrapped in their historical context, then they are effectively dead. On the other hand, if we view them from our present perspective, there must be more things to be registered than self-congratulations on advances in attitude. Must not the business of criticism consist of systole and diastole, the constant interplay between awareness of the text's historical context and awareness of our own, no less historical, context? At all events, the polarization of attitudes towards George seems to remain as marked as ever, as can be seen in a different dimension in the ongoing debate about the contribution George's poetry and ideas made to the thinking of Claus von Stauffenberg and hence to his development into an active opponent of Hitler.[7]

These are matters that have been of special concern to the two very extensive biographies of George that have appeared in recent years, by Robert Norton and Thomas Karlauf.[8] While Karlauf occasionally quotes a poem in full, and may even express enthusiasm for it,[9] he makes no secret of the fact that he has used George's texts as a biographical source rather than addressing them as poems.[10] He borrows in his support a remark of George's that his poems are to be understood more literally than one might think,[11] which is not quite a justification for treating them as "Erlebnislyrik," and sidesteps another quotation of George's from the same source, "dass Dichtung nicht Erlebnisausdruck ist, sondern Spracherlebnis."[12] Norton similarly employs George's poetry to illustrate his biographical thesis, but he is notably more critical than Karlauf. He finds an early work astonishing for its "humorless lack of irony," another is described as a "sordid tale of ferocious narcissism and raving possessiveness"; rare praise is offered in terms such as "grand gestures . . . spectacular," "unnervingly eerie," or "terrible vision" in "simple lordly diction."[13] The most violent rhetoric of distaste is reserved for the later poetry. "Die tote Stadt"[14] is seen as "a shocking poem," and of "Ihr baut verbrechende an maass und grenze" (8:31) Norton, brushing aside any suggestion that its concluding vision of destruction is prophecy, and preferring to suggest that George welcomed, advocated, and should be held accountable for any such destruction, concludes: "the obscenity of the poem is manifest and irrefutable."[15] Most insistently Norton takes the word "blutschmach" in the poem "Der Krieg" to mean "miscegenation," and describes the idea that those who commit it will be eradicated as "condoning the mass liquidation of entire peoples." This is thus "quite possibly the nadir of George's entire poetic career in moral if not also in artistic terms."[16] There is no sign that Norton has given consideration to George's use of the word "blut" in his poetry, still less that he consulted the lengthy essay that explores the

use of the word "blutschmach" in relation to Old Testament ideas — and indeed comes to the conclusion that "blutschmach" could be understood as foretelling the crimes committed by the National Socialists.[17] Instead, by suggesting that George is licensing genocide, Norton is preparing his reader for the clear condemnation with which he rounds off his book, where he points to George and his ideals as helping to create Nazism — a conclusion already hinted at in his use of the term "Führer" to describe George.[18] Karlauf, for all his much more moderate tone, makes similar accusations, referring to the "ideologischen Verheerungen" to which George's (poetic) work partially led and noting that George's strict separation of intellectual and political life contributed to prepare the soil for "the brown seed"; this latter point is repeated in the concluding sentence of the biography.[19]

The reduction of George's poetry to its biographical elements, and the focus upon George as a leader figure rather than a poet is, then, a well-established feature of writing about him in recent years. We have to look a long way back to find a book that deals with George as a political figure on the basis of his poetry: Klaus Landfried's profound and even-handed — if by no means uncritical — appreciation of George, which observes in its introduction:

> Die werkimmanente Interpretation bleibt unentbehrlich und bedarf zugleich der Ergänzung durch die historische Zuordnung. Von einer überall verbindlichen Methode halte ich nichts. Allzu rasch endet man dabei im Zirkel der petitio principii, bei der Bestätigung der eigenen Voraussetzung.[20]

This is not to say that the poetry has been completely neglected. The annotated edition of George's works by Georg Peter Landmann and Ute Oelmann, now almost complete, has created a particular focus for interest in it. The now-defunct *Castrum Peregrini*, for example, in its volume *Im Zeichen Stefan Georges*, maintained a tradition of interpretations of poems,[21] and this has been upheld in each of the volumes of the *George-Jahrbuch* edited by Ute Oelmann and Wolfgang Braungart; the latter's study of ritualistic elements in George's work is strongly text-based.[22] Even in works apparently devoted to nonliterary disciplines, such as sociology or economics, evidence of close reading of George's poetry can be found.[23] Even those who are dismissive of George in broader terms may sometimes exempt his poetry from their boycott, as in Gerhard Plumpe's statement: "Es bleiben daher lebendig allein jene Gedichte Georges, die aus sich selbst verständlich werden und des umständlichen Verweises auf das Leben des Kreises nicht bedürfen." The limits of such a view, however, become apparent when Plumpe denies lyric status to *Der Stern des Bundes* (1914), seeing it as an esoteric volume addressed only to the Circle.[24]

One area of disagreement concerning the work itself has been whether George's work should be considered as a unified whole, as he himself seemed to imply, or whether there are evident discontinuities within it, beginning perhaps with the coming of the angel at the start of *Der Teppich des Lebens* (1899), with the new tone established in *Der Siebente Ring*, or with the mythicizing of the dead Maximilian Kronberger. A persuasive case for continuity has been made by Petersdorff[25] — a case incidentally countenanced by Norton, seemingly so that he can round off a recent essay with the grumpy and far-fetched suggestion that "so stellt Georges Werk als Ganzes nichts weniger als den anhaltenden Versuch dar, Algabals luft- und wärmeloses Unterreich an die Oberfläche zu zerren und dort zu verpflanzen."[26] To my mind the shifts in George's work, while not marking any clear caesurae, are nonetheless significant; George himself, while claiming "Ihr sahet wechsel • doch ich tat das gleiche" (6/7:7), goes on to indicate that his style may change again, as indeed it did. What I shall be discussing here is a theme that predominates in the later work, and can be seen as the extension of the idea of the Circle. George's idea of the secret kingdom or realm is in part shaped by the opposition to the modern world that is its opposite, and I shall therefore discuss some of the features of George's critique of that world before passing on to consider the theme of the secret realm itself, paying particular attention to the ideas and images that are associated with it in the poetry.[27]

George's attack on modern civilization, which in general terms links him to modernism, has several very specific aspects. Three features of the contemporary world that he criticizes are its acquisitiveness, its empty clangor, and its lack of clear vision. Among the representative figures of bourgeois society whom George dismisses as "pfiff und zahl" — lawyers, merchants, and clerks (9:24) — it is the merchants for whom he reserves especial scorn. In *Der Stern des Bundes* two pictures of an insensitive, self-interested world that takes no heed of the visitations of the prophet or of the Christ figure, "der Herr," include reference to buying and selling ("handelt weiter," 8:34; "unzahl von händen rührte sich," 8:36). The present age is one in which merchants have become all-powerful ("feisten krämer," 6/7:14) and even rulers have taken on the appearance of traders (6/7:20). George notes that a principal motive for fighting the First World War was, from Germany's point of view, a desire for trade ("krämern," 9:26), a reference to Germany's colonial ambitions, while the English concealed beneath imposing words a desire to enjoy the material prosperity of the status quo ("feile nutzsucht," 9:26). Empty noise is a feature of modern town life ("lärm," 6/7:100, 102 and "schrei'n," 6/7:39), especially associated with meaningless activity ("tummeln," 6/7:10; "getümmel und gekling," 6/7:181). The interests of modern society are summed up in the picture of the throng "(die) tages feilscht und abends tollt" (6/7:30).

For George, materialism was the great evil of his time, a threat to the ideals he cherished and a force that the Circle was ordained to combat. The material achievements of the age, symbolized especially in the recurring image of tall buildings (6/7:32, 8:31, 9:55), are rejected as valueless. Equally worthless are the things the majority value: this is the message of "Die tote Stadt": "Das gut was euch vor allem galt ist schutt" (6/7:31, as well as the question posed by the revenant Manlius to the present world of Trier, 6/7:16). The material possessions that they prize are dismissed as "wust," "tand," and "flitter" (9:22 and 30; 6/7:14), as "faules laub . . . im herbstwind" (9:49). The vital substance of the nation has been sacrificed to the idol of this superficial materialism, "Der flitter hohle flache — und gemeine / Aus eurem pfunde münzt" (6/7:181), and it is in this sense that George can reproach his people in the Old Testament echo: "Auch ihr gabt euer erbteil für ein mus" (6/7:182).

George sees his ideals as not only threatened by materialism but, at the opposite extreme, by empty intellectual speculation that loses contact with reality and in particular ignores the vital principle of incarnation. The present age is seen as one in which "der geist entwand sich blindlings aus der siele" (8:47), in which the hermit seeks to inveigle others into rejecting life (8:97) and the plausible mystic preaches "Vom wahren Jenseits und vom falschen irdischen schein" (9:86).

The hope of renewal is therefore associated with the healing of civilization from these two evils, from "zerstreuung / Und zuviel kosten von dem süssen gift" (6/7:183). The golden mean is achieved by harmonizing two principles of which empty speculation and materialism represent extreme distortions — namely, a belief in transcendental ideals on the one hand and in incarnation as the immanent expression of the divine on the other.[28] Another of the "Tafeln" from *Der Siebente Ring*, entitled "München" (6/7:179), hails the city as being as yet uncontaminated by "dem doppelgift," which seems to be a parallel reference. That both the Frauenkirche and the fact that spirits walk the streets of the city are mentioned in this poem seems in different ways to guarantee that sterile speculation and crass materialism are being resisted there. Above all the golden mean is fulfilled by the ideal adepts of the Circle as described in "Der Dichter in Zeiten der Wirren": just as they are equally free from "dreisten dünkel" and "erlogener brüderei," words that recall the opening of the "Vorrede zu Maximin" (7:62) and seem to offer a caricature of right-wing and left-wing political views, so they are free from the particular dangers of the present time, from "dünnen hirngeweb und giftigem flitter," speculation and materialism. These evils had already been identified in "Die Hüter des Vorhofs," for the business of the "Hüter" is to heal the wounds of the earth, which have been dealt by "gier und wahn" (6/7:54). They further recall the poem in the "Vorspiel" to *Der Teppich des Lebens*, in which the angel successively points out to the poet the noisy throng, devoted to materialism

("Forscht die dinge nützet ihre gaben" is their device), then the restrained followers of a pallid, other-worldly Christianity, and finally the small group of the elect, vowed to the ideals of Hellas (5:16). The erectors of high buildings, those offenders against the golden mean, against "maass und grenze" will, the prophecy runs, turn finally to heaven in despair, realizing how their worthless material goods and their empty intellectualism have destroyed them, and cry:

> Was tun eh wir im eignen schutt ersticken
> Eh eignes spukgebild das hirn uns zehrt? (8:31)

The secret realm is the extension of the idea of the circle of followers, bound together by love, as *Der Stern des Bundes* makes clear, into an ideal state. The experience of Maximin, the representation of the vital idea of incarnation, serves as guarantee of the poet's way of life and beliefs, and represents also a foundation on which the poet is to build. The development of the Circle is the first part of this work; there remains the question as to how the cell that the Circle represents can be extended into nation-wide regeneration. Within *Der Stern des Bundes* there are poems that celebrate, in visionary style, the coming of a new world: the rapturous poem of new creation that opens the third book (8:82), and the festival scene that closes it (8:111) are evident examples of this, as is the fleeting moment in "Vor-abend war es unsrer bergesfeier" (8:74) when dream turns to reality. Less clear, it seems to me, is the poem that introduces the idea of the realm of the spirit:

> Dies ist reich des Geistes • abglanz
> Meines reiches • hof und hain. (8:83)

The capitalizing of "Geist" makes it clear that here this difficult word (which for English readers often hovers awkwardly between "mind" and "spirit"[29]) refers to spirit and indeed, as Oelmann points out (8:144), may evoke the "third age" of the world envisioned by Joachim of Fiore. In his detailed study of *Der Stern des Bundes* Aler notes that this poem is markedly different in style and rhythm, is indeed "das reinste Widerspiel" to the "new creation" poem that preceded it, which, Aler persuasively argues, echoes Virgil's Fourth Eclogue.[30] Most critics are inclined to see the "reich des Geistes" as the product of that prelapsarian vision, and hence see the two poems as interdependent;[31] but I take the realm of the spirit as being simply a celebration of the transformative power of the Circle as community: the new kingdom that George hopes for is not achieved here. Morwitz sees the "reich des Geistes" as "abglanz" of the poet's early dream;[32] but to suggest that the present reality is only a shadow of a past dream seems to me to reduce its significance greatly; if we recall that

"Traum" in George is nearly always forward-looking, it appears rather to be an (unfulfilled) reflection of something that will be achieved in the future. The nouns "hof und hain" (in the version in the ninth series of the *Blätter für die Kunst* the latter word was "heim")[33] stand unattached but are taken by Morwitz to describe the "reich des geistes" — symbolizing cultivated and uncultivated nature "im neuen Bereich." But they are strange features of a spiritual realm,[34] and I take them to be part of a future natural realm, when the spiritual kingdom, "mein Reich," becomes actualized in reality.[35] In the "reich des Geistes" the adepts are prepared for that later realm.

That the Circle and the secret realm are complementary ideas is indicated symbolically by the "rätselgesicht" of the ruin of Burg Falkenstein that George describes in a later poem: he glimpses hope for the future in the circle of the tower that rises above the rough foursquare structure below, and in the sight of a living tree growing from weathered walls (9:42). The idea of the Circle expanding into a kingdom is hinted at in a poem almost at the end of the third book of *Der Stern des Bundes*:

> Entlassen seid ihr aus dem innern raum
> Der zelle für den kern geballter kräfte
> Und trächtiger schauer in das weite land. (8:110)

For a time, evidently up to the coming of the First World War, George seems to have hoped that this development might happen soon. He foresees "Das in ihr Tuende tut die allheit bald" (8:102),[36] and speaks of "Das neue volk von dir [Maximin] erweckt" (8:91); similarly in the first of the "Gebete" in *Das Neue Reich* he has a vision of "hunderte von edlen stirnen / Auf die dein schimmer heimlich eingeflossen" (9:38).[37]

The idea of expansion is spelled out clearly in the poem "Die Winke" (9:35–36), the epigraph to which is taken from Maximin's poetry. Its first stanza shows the poet alone, seeing apocalyptic signs, hidden from his contemporaries, which presage both coming destruction and an encounter with supernatural forces. The second verse shows the poet with two companions receiving the message of Maximin and the commission to fulfill that message: the small group of the initiated is to blossom into the Circle, the members of which will be molded after the pattern of Maximin. The third verse shows the poet with six companions — indicating some larger number: the Circle as reality — looking over a devastated and barren landscape that will one day flower into the new kingdom; as yet it is a secret realm, in which has been planted the seed of the future, and to which they have communicated the inspiration of the god. "Die Winke" (the devastated land of the third stanza suggests that it is a postwar poem) reveals the uncertainty of the late poetry: how long "brache" will persist is unknown, and by echoing the Old Testament image of the glimpse into a Promised

Land it suggests that the new realm will not be entered in the speaker's lifetime.[38] George's postwar poetry, with its overtones of uncertainty and resignation, indicates that he saw national regeneration as a distant hope.

Another word with religious overtones that becomes associated with the theme of the secret kingdom is "hain." The grove is a place dedicated to ancient rites (1:67, 3:21, 6/7:126), and can also be a place hallowed by actions associated with it, such as the poet's covenant with the angel (5:19), or the remembered sacrifices of love (6/7:104), or by the palladium that it shelters (5:52). The first line of "Der Widerchrist": "Dort kommt er vom berge • dort steht er im hain!" announces the Antichrist's pretensions to divine status; by taking his stand in the grove, he arrogates to himself the rank of god, and the rest of the poem indicates how a gullible people will fulfill this claim for him. The second of the "Erwiderungen" poems surrounds the coming of Maximin with several images of fulfillment: among these is the altar of sacrifice in the sacred grove, now wreathed with the roses of youth, spring, and beauty (6/7:94). In the later poetry the grove is directly linked with the theme of the secret realm: the poet's vision of future fulfillment includes "leichte paare in den hainen / Lustwandelnd" (8:73). In the third part of the "Hyperion" trilogy Hölderlin hears sounds that announce the future coming of the kingdom: "ein pochen war im feld / In meinem hain von schlafenden gewalten" (9:14). The distinction between the whole of the poet's native land, the "feld," and the particular enclave of the grove suggests the religious significance of the new kingdom, while the word "meinem" hints that it will be the flowering of his own cherished ideals. George's celebration of Germany as the land "wo flöte aus dem weidicht tönt • aus hainen / Windharfen rauschen" (9:26) emphasizes the hidden powers of myth and legend that are both a link to an imperishable past and a guarantee of renewal. These are ideas that are also stressed in "Burg Falkenstein," where the poet's past and that of his country are together summoned up by the "murmeln der haine" (9:42): here again the link to a distant past is a pledge of the future.

To what extent is the secret realm given physical correlatives? The references above, and the term "Secret Germany" might seem to limit it to established frontiers, and we know that after his earlier cosmopolitan interests, reflected both in the contacts with living European poets and in his travels, George turned back to his own country. But in *Der Siebente Ring* at least, the actual physical correlatives are placed more widely than that. The poem "Franken" (6/7:18–19) reminds us of George's family links to France, and evokes the wide borders of the Carolingian Empire; its title and last line envisage a realm transcending present national frontiers. That last line, "RETURNENT FRANC EN FRANCE DULCE TERRE" is not, as is often supposed, a direct quotation from the *Chanson de Roland*,[39] but a conflation of "Francs s'en irunt en France, la lur tere"

(line 50) with other lines, such as "Jo vos plevis, ja returnerunt Franc" (line 1704) and frequent references to "dulce France" (for example, in line 109). Here the poet seems to envisage a realm that will unite France to much of Germany. "Die Gräber in Speier" (6/7:22–23) calls up the shade of Friedrich II and the vast empire over which he ruled, extending to Sicily and hence including the Mediterranean south. The revival of the old kingdom of Burgundy as "Neu-Burgund" was evidently a notion George used jocularly in conversation from 1916 onwards.[40] The Rhine, which remained an important element in George's world from his childhood to his old age,[41] and about which he planned to compose an epic poem,[42] may be predominantly a German river but it embraces other countries. It is in the fifth of George's "Rhein-Tafeln" (6/7:175), with the phrase "Dies ist das land," that an identification of the Rhineland with the secret realm is suggested; the image of flowers and bushes springing from old walls is, as in "Burg Falkenstein," a symbol of possible renewal.[43]

Four poems in *Das Neue Reich* (1928) show, in similar visionary manner to poems in *Der Stern des Bundes* (8:82 and 111), the achieving of the new realm, and here the physical realities correspond much more to Germany. The central verse of "Goethes lezte Nacht in Italien" describes a wine-harvest in the Rhineland, an area that has retained something of its classical heritage and is thus destined to be the center of cultural renewal. The final lines of the verse are richly ambiguous:

> Dort an dem römischen Walle • der grenze des Reichs •
> Sah ich in ahnung mein heimliches muttergefild. (9:9)

The Roman *limes*, like the river Rhine mentioned earlier in the verse, marks the boundary of the kingdom — of the Roman *imperium*, but also of the future kingdom that Goethe in his role as seer will later evoke. The words "ahnung," "heimlich," and "muttergefild" unite distant past and distant future; in the present, these realms must remain hidden, as memory or prospect. In the last verse of this poem Goethe relates his vision of the coming of the new kingdom. The details of the setting here —"Säulenhöfe . . . mit bäumen und brunnen" (9:10) — are classical rather then German, but serve to show the complete absorption of classical ideals into Germany: "Maass" and "stärke" are in balance, and the uniting of "marmor" and "rosen" shows art fulfilled in living form.

The similar vision lent to Hölderlin in the third poem of the "Hyperion" trilogy, in which again classical ideals are seen to be fulfilled in the Germany of the future, significantly does not reach so far as Goethe's: such is the difference between a poem of 1908 and a poem of 1914.[44] The speaker sees the coming of the god, but the establishing of an ideal realm is a distant dream even in his vision, and the accent falls on such words as "künftig," "traum," and "einst" (9:14). The final vision of the poem "Der

Krieg" (9:26) is introduced by the poet's homage to Germany as a "Land . . . wo der Traum noch webt," and the word "weidicht," recalling an echo of George's childhood (see 6/7:14) and his earlier dream-kingdom (6/7:117), may point specifically to the Rhineland. The last verse brings together classical and Germanic gods in a now-familiar union of north and south. In "Burg Falkenstein," similarly, north and south are united; but although the Rhine is specifically mentioned here, the poet's vision embraces the whole of Germany as well as the Mediterranean south (9:42, 43–44).

It is, naturally enough, to the poem "Geheimes Deutschland" that the reader will look in order to understand the nature of the secret kingdom. It is a strange poem, of which it has recently been asserted that a close reading reveals that George harbored little hope that his ideas would have a tangible effect on society at large; rather the poem focuses on individual spirituality.[45] The term "geheimes Deutschland" in George's sense is first attested in an essay by Wolfskehl of 1910.[46] We find it in a letter of Gundolf's to Wolfskehl of Christmas 1911,[47] and it occurs in Hellingrath's lecture of March 1915 on "Hölderlin und die Deutschen."[48] It was to remain a powerful, if abstract idea, as opposed to the word that, largely under the influence of Wolters, was used to describe the circle of friends — namely, "der staat,"[49] and it was famously to be addressed by Ernst Kantorowicz in his speech at the University of Frankfurt in November 1933.[50] It has often been believed to be the phrase uttered by Claus von Stauffenberg immediately before his execution, although this remains contentious.[51]

The date of the poem "Geheimes Deutschland" is not known.[52] It is divided into three sections by the exclamations invoking "abgrund," "sonnentraum," and "gipfel"; the first part is itself divided into two parts, with three verses describing the disastrous state of civilization, and three the promise of a solution and the poet's response to a call. The second section comprises eight verses in which features of the secret kingdom are described; the last two verses look to the future. The disastrous present is shown to derive from the greed of man on the one hand, and scientific investigation on the other, which carries greater potential for destruction than for creation; in consequence the secrets of nature have been exposed, there is no space for hidden growth, and the free life of primitive peoples is threatened. The response of the gods has been to create "neuen raum in den raum" (9:46), a hidden and invisible realm where the seed may grow that will one day create a renewed culture. The new realm that can be found in "die heilige heimat," that is, in Germany, is pictured in images of virgin forests and unexploited land; the descent of the "sonnentraum," which echoes the idea of incarnation, is a prelude to the poet's celebration of the secret realm (9:47), which takes the form of evocations of seven figures, together with the poet's own apocalyptic vision (8:32). Apart from

Maximin (verse 11) and Wolfskehl (verse 12) these figures are as unexpected as some of those celebrated in the "Zeitgedichte" had been: two friends who played no central role in George's Circle, two men he rarely or never met, and the "Kosmiker" Schuler, with whom George had broken in 1904. They are not celebrated for their poetry, which is only mentioned in the case of Saladin Schmitt (verse 15) who has abandoned it. It has been noted that two of the men were antisemites,[53] but this seems no more relevant than that two of them are Jewish. What, then, do they have in common?

Two things stand out here: one is the ability to see and to accept the invisible and the apparently irrational, whatever the consequences, as in the case of the archaeologist Hans von Prott (verse 9); Alfred Schuler (verse 10), though presented in negative terms, is a reminder of the time when spirits walked the streets of Munich (6/7:179), and through him George acknowledges the role of the "Kosmikerzeit" in the time leading up to Maximin's coming. The reactions of Wolfskehl and Vallentin (verse 16) are those of wonder. The other quality is that of sacrifice, which George had formerly attached to the early death of Maximin (8:9 and 14, and see also the preparation for the idea in 6/7:106), and which here is reflected in the lives of Schmitt and Glöckner (verse 14); if it is love that creates the circle of friends, it is the notion of sacrifice that will be important to the expansion of that circle: an idea, it should be noted, which is by no means new in George's work.[54] Love and sacrifice are indeed connected, as they are here, in earlier poems, and the notion is central to Victor's act of self-sacrifice in the poem "Victor * Adalbert" (9:94–96). Other aspects of sacrifice are the acceptance of death for an ideal (8:75) and the service of the gods, whose existence and value is acknowledged by sacrifice (8:28).

Both the awareness of hidden things, and the idea of sacrifice, are contrasts to the excessive rationalization and the greedy acquisitiveness of the modern world that George attacks at the start of the poem; and the fact that his praise is reserved for unlikely people is itself evidence of an ability to see beneath the surface of things. Of such unlikely material is the kingdom of the spirit created, which then, at some unknown future time, can flower into the new realm. The latter idea occupies the last two verses of the poem, which foretell to the poet's compatriots ("brüder") that a judgment-day for their present civilization will come, and the unseen miracle will come into being.

The framing verses of "Geheimes Deutschland" reflect a shift in George's use of natural images in the later work,[55] for although the world of the Mediterranean retains its significance, we see the poet turning away from the clarity of the southern scene to the darkness of the hidden forest (9:47). While the coming of Maximin was frequently celebrated in images of light and contrasted with the dark world of the *Kosmiker*, the poet now indicates the value of darkness that surrounds the idea of birth and of

secret origins. In the later poetry, features such as the ravine and the forest (both frequently negative areas of threat in the earlier poetry) and, most strikingly, the sea assume new importance. A new interest in hidden potential is revealed by the contrast between two references to unseen volcanic activity. Whereas in evoking a southern setting in 1898 George included an apparent reference to Vesuvius with: "In lila-himmel streuen berge funken" (5:69),[56] sixteen years later he records a (recent) memory of it thus: "nur rauch / des bergs verrät gewaltig innere feuer" (9:17; the original version of this idea is given at 9:136).

A cognate interest of the late poetry is in mystery and magic. The coming of Maximin is presented as an enigma: "Ergeben steh ich vor des rätsels macht"; after showing the three riddles that Maximin's existence poses — concerning the relationship between him and the poet, his early death, and the sacrificial nature of that death — George concludes: "Die tiefste wurzel ruht in ewiger nacht," and tells his followers: "Mehr deutet nicht!" (8:14). Silence is the poet's response to the mystery of Maximin (8:20, 24), and to the dark prophecy of Hölderlin (8:100). Elsewhere we find the recognition that the mysteries of life are incomparably higher than any interpretation of them: "Wer höchstes lebte braucht die deutung nicht" (8:104), and "Unhebbar ist der lebenbilder sinn" (8:107). Hence in "Geheimes Deutschland" the secret realm itself is referred to as "Wunder undeutbar für heut" (9:49). It is by means of a magic spell that the poet summons up the shades of dead Emperors (6/7:22), and Hyperion's invocation of love is a spell that, with the additional aid of a magic circle, he employs to create his vision of the future god and the future community (9:14). The poet presents the "rune" as an image of mystery that only retains its magical quality and its strength so long as it is not explained or revealed (8:98). It was particularly in relation to the interpretation of poetry that George remarked: "Dunkelheiten, das Infinite, ist schöpferisch, das völlig Klare ist tot,"[57] but the sentiment evidently has wider application.

The word "zauber" itself, in the earlier poetry signifying no more than enchantment, is later regarded as a positive and vital force, seeming to possess the controlling power of fate and being able to destroy and rebuild (8:37). Like the magic formula that the seer wrests from the guardians of the sources of life (9:9), it is the yield of the seer's confrontation with hidden forces, with "das Andre," and is then communicated in living form, as "begehung" and "bild," to his people (8:103). Magic is also an atmosphere, a context in which the relationships between man's mind and the things around him are transfigured: Goethe tells his people that only when their blindness has been loosed, under the influence of the ray of inspiration he brings from the south, will they appreciate "zauber des Dings — und des Leibes • der göttlichen norm" (9:9). The magic of which the poet's companion speaks in "Burg Falkenstein" (9:42–43) is not some-

thing ephemerally mysterious like ghosts; it is a creative power that binds together past, present, and future, revealing a meaningful unity and continuity. It is this power, a power of insight, which enables the poet to summon up his vision later in the poem: "der goldene ton" (9:43) is the expression of a magic that has not been lost. The ability to see beneath the surface of things, and to leave behind the limitations of the human intellect, is a sustaining power, vital to the continuity of life, as the faun tells the hunter in "Der Mensch und der Drud" (9:56).

Confrontation with such mysteries produces also a frisson of dread at the unknown and unimaginable: words such as "schauer" and "grauen" become important to George's later poetry in this context. They describe George's reactions to Maximin (6/7:90, 100), and he instructs his followers:

> Lasst was verhüllt ist: senkt das haupt mit mir:
> "O Retter" in des dunklen grauens wind. (8:14)

The wind is not a hostile force, since "grauen" is a positive reaction: the speaker is filled not with horror but with the spirit of mystery. In *Der Teppich des Lebens* the poet encourages himself "Begehre das graun / Das schwellt nicht mehr sprengt" (5:84) — this dread is a creative force, not least because it is associated with the mystery of new life ("trächtige schauer," 8:110) and (metaphorical) birth ("grausen," 8:69).

Dread of the numinous ("schauer") can betoken respect for human qualities that have supernatural significance (6/7:20 and 26), for artistic power (6/7:14), or for visionary experiences (8:32, and see also "grausen," 9:47). In "Burg Falkenstein" it may be associated with the notion of magic as a power binding together past and present, since the phrase "In der friedvollen vorzeit gemächlichem graun" (9:42) could be interpreted in this way.[58] A feeling of dread is also the seer's response to the outbreak of war, since he can see beyond the superficial issues involved ("grausen," 9:23), a feeling shared only in small measure and all too briefly by his compatriots ("welthaft hohen schauer" and "dies frösteln," 9:22).

A kindred "hidden" area on which George draws in his later work is that of legend and fairy-tale; it is a natural corollary of his concern with an unknown future that he should turn to the mysterious past. In two poems in which his own childhood is mythically interwoven with the origins of his native land, "Ursprünge" (6/7:116–17) and "Burg Falkenstein" (9:41–44), he speaks of the dream; a nation treasures the dreams of its childhood, as much as individuals do, for they are a guarantee of the future. Because it is a country where "der Traum noch webt" (9:26), George's dream can prophesy Germany's cultural renewal. His decision to go to France as a young man is presented as the call of a "märchenruf" (6/7:18) — not so much a memory of the tales his grandfather told him,

though the poem also mentions them, as a reference to the poet's sense of the origins of his family. The disciples of the new community for whom "ort der wiege / Heimat bleibt ein märchenklang" (8:83) do not sever all connection with their origins, which remain a source of fruitful memory even after they have been reborn into a new world.[59] The task of the present is to revive in new form the ideas that old legends incorporate, to discover the "promised land" which Böcklin evoked "im duft der sagenferne" (6/7:14). An example of this is given in the reference to the treasure of the Nibelungs, which the Rhine has preserved and which is brought to life again by the figure with the trident: scattering the water of the river, he revives the parched land round about, and the treasure of the past is made fruitful in the present: "pracht die lebt wird aus der toten fabel" (6/7:174). The last section of *Das Neue Reich* is introduced by the poem "Welch ein kühn-leichter schritt" (9:99), in which forgotten worlds are revived: the intimate world of fairy-tale is roused by a soft footfall, while a horn call awakens the slumbering province of song — a genre in which, as the poem called "Das Lied" exemplifies (9:100–101), elements of fairy-tale and legend are interwoven.

If the center of the circle is marked by the sacred flame of love, the secret realm may contain at its heart a hidden treasure, a palladium. Various images are employed to evoke this idea. That of the precious jewel has natural affinities with the ideal: in the poem to Gundolf that celebrates him as "ein kind vom eden," the paradisial realm, he is seen to wear "Das kleinod köstlicher als manches königreich" (6/7:68). At a time of cultural darkness it is a jewel that Böcklin is seen to salvage:

> Was einzig hebt aus schlamm und schutt — ihr ehrt
> Und kennts nicht mehr • dies kleinod reinster helle
> Das alle farben strahlt rett ich zur fremde
> Bis ihr entblindet wieder nach ihm ruft. (6/7:14)

This jewel might be taken to be "reine Kunst,"[60] but at the end of this poem Böcklin is seen as the guardian of the sacred flame, an idea extending beyond simply that of art. Similarly, when the poet brings to his country's borders the "kleinod" he hopes to transform, through the agency of the norn, into acceptable and communicable form, but loses the jewel when no corresponding word is found to express it, he laments that "nie mein land den schatz gewann" ("Das Wort," 9:107). This treasure is clearly more than a work of art. The word "schatz" as indicating a distant ideal occurs in *Der Teppich des Lebens* (5:41), although the notion of a preserved "heiligtum im haine" in the same book (5:52) seems more narrowly focused upon art. More relevant in the present context is the praise of the Greeks in "Hyperion": "Die ihr von greisen den schatz enkeln gesamt übertrugt" (9:13): here a whole way of life, a national tradition is being handed on.

A more direct evocation of the notion of the palladium comes in the word "hort"; thus Pamfilia in "Der Brand des Tempels" becomes not only the last flowering but the very embodiment of a dying civilization (9:68). Fire, as in that stolen by the Promethean figure of the seer "for his people," may be a similar treasure, as may a work of art, such as the Madonna painting in Cologne that George refers to as "Schirmherrin" (6/7:176).[61] And it is a statue that is referred to in the word "schutzbild" (9:26) as the guarantor of future victory. This phrase recalls the "weihebilder" mentioned in "Die tote Stadt" (6/7:30–31), a poem in which a number of themes associated with the notion of the secret realm cluster together. The fortress of the upper town dreams both of past and future glories; its sacred images are surrounded by the silence appropriate to mysteries; the grassy streets of the town recall the motif of new life springing from old stones, and is here made parallel to the description of its inhabitants, whose bodies "blühen durch verschlissnes tuch": true strength and beauty are hidden beneath an apparently impoverished exterior. Reference to the sacred images is vital to the poem, since the irony of the title depends on the revelation that the decayed upper town is in reality the potential source of new life while the lower town succumbs to the pestilence of materialism. This is emphasized by the description of the upper town as "mutterstadt," for it will again, as it did in the past, produce new life, having maintained contact with the gods. The contrast between the two towns bears out the idea that "Ein volk ist tot wenn seine götter tot sind" (9:26).

This last phrase, echoed in the dictum "Gott ist ein schemen wenn ihr selbst vermürbt!" (8:33), suggests that ultimately the palladium that is guarded is less important than the guardians themselves; hence the priests of "Der Brand des Tempels" are doomed to destruction because through their weakness their gods have lost their force (9:64). The figure of the guardian in George's later poetry continues ideas suggested in earlier poems in the figure of the shepherd (3:14) and "Der Freund der Fluren" (5:38). The fact that the young man who returns from "der wunderwald" is given the degrading duties of a cowherd (9:101) marks his rejection by the community; but his task is also symbolic, for he is the preserver, if not of a tradition, at least of a valuable vision, which he hands on in the only way he can to the only audience he has — the representatives of a future generation. Allied to this theme of guardianship is that of service. An ideal of service is fulfilled not so much by the bond of master and disciple in a relationship of power and servility, but rather in the common service to an ideal, particularly the ideal of love ("dienst der liebe," 8:63); the master is included in the task the circle fulfils:

> Unser licht [ist] die glut im ringe
> Und ihr dienst uns ziel und glück. (8:90)

The attitude of George in his later poetry is summed up in the words describing the seer of "Der Krieg": "Er liebt und dient auf seinem weg" (9:23).

The role of seer imposes upon the poet a necessary stance of objectivity and passivity. His gaze is fixed upon the future, whether on the terrors of a coming period, or the most distant "lichtere zukunft" (9:30). George had often seemed aware that fulfillment belonged to a distant future, from the schoolboy's feeling expressed in *Die Fibel* (1901): "Mir grünt es spät des ruhmes reis" (9:27), through to the hope that past cultural glories might return as a "späte spende" (5:52). Towards the end of his life the poet wonders whether someone in the future will be able to share the vision he has had (9:103); at first sight there is more than a hint of resignation here, as marks a number of the poems in "Das Lied," but the poems, like the celebrated "Das Wort" (9:107), can be interpreted as a positive statement as well: uncertain as to the future, the poet nevertheless affirms the value of his vision. In an age of materialism, it is natural that it should be incomprehensible.

A notable aspect of the passivity that characterizes the late poetry is the predominance of aural imagery we find in it. George's earlier work is almost exclusively visual in its imagery. The change is partly conditioned by the central relationship with the dead Maximin; but the poet hears from other sources as well — from the god (8:18, 22; 9:36), from the divine wrath (8:28), from the seed (8:69), and from the earth (9:103). A listening posture is implied in his encounter with "der Mittagschreck" in "Geheimes Deutschland" (9:47), and in the balance of question and answer in the many dialogues of *Das Neue Reich*. In particular, signs of the future are heard rather than seen; even the poet's vivid "vision" of future destruction (8:32) is, after the opening two lines, described in aural images. Brighter hopes for the future are also expressed in aural terms — the music of flute and harp (9:26), the susurration of the groves (9:42), and the "golden tone" which symbolizes the new age (9:43). The poet hears the music of the sea in the trilogy "An die Kinder des Meeres" (9:18, 19), and the attitude of passivity and receptivity in the later poetry is summed up in the poem "In stillste ruh" (9:110), especially in the final image of the sea-shell.

That the poet's attention is now directed less towards outward fulfillment, more to inner potential is expressed in the image of the slowly ripening seed, an image already used to convey the inspiration brought by Maximin (referred to as "Dein same" and "wirklich wie der keim" [8:20 and 25]). Although the poem that begins "Mir sagt das samenkorn im untren schacht / 'Aus dunst und düster ringt sich jedes ding'" (8:69) may be read as a comment on a particular relationship between the poet and a younger friend, it can, like others that draw on the notion of the seed (see 8:61) point towards the notion of the new realm as the ultimate fruit of

the Circle: the spiritual rebirth of the disciple in the latter poem is paradigmatic for that of the Circle as a whole. In *Das Neue Reich* words such as "kern," "keim," and "saaten" (9:26, 29, 36) clearly point towards the as yet hidden kingdom.

While it is the gods of the upper world alone, "die Himmlischen," who can intervene to save the earth's most precious substances by the creation of the secret kingdom (9:46), it is with "die Untern" that the poet shares his concern at the spectacle of the modern world, where the earth, exploited and exposed by a greedy, inquisitive, and acquisitive culture, is deprived of its secret and hidden places: it is their realm, the realm of creative mystery, that is threatened (9:46). The idea of the Olympian gods and their mediator, Maximin, is by no means revoked in the later poetry, but George's hopes for the future are linked to less apolline chthonic forces, as seen in the figures of the faun and the norn (9:53–56, 107) — although these forces are not always personified in this way. Two images in particular attach to these hidden powers. Their latent state is indicated by the image of sleep, their potential activity by their pulsating. "Pochen" is a word regularly used for the beating of the heart or pulse (see especially 5:76 and 77). The "Templer" fulfill their most important task at moments in history when the earth-mother is failing to continue the vital work of incarnation and divinization: her lack of vigor is expressed by the slowed beat of her pulse, which "starr und müde pocht" (6/7:53). The renewal of the earth through the coming of Maximin is suggested in a similar image: "Die starre erde pocht / Neu durch ein heilig herz" (6/7:92). In the poem "Hyperion" the speaker as he returns to his homeland hears the chthonic forces preparing for the emergence of the new realm: "Ein pochen war im feld / In meinem hain von schlafenden gewalten" (9:14).

The image of sleep can connote the mysteries hidden in a work of art and uncomprehended by the masses (see 6/7:6), but it is used particularly of the secret realm, which is described as "schlummernder fülle schooss" (9:47), and the seed of which "im schützenden schlaf . . . noch ruht" (9:49). The use of this image explains why there hangs over the poet's vision in "Burg Falkenstein" a "schläfrige luft" (9:43): the air is full of expectancy. And it explains the detail at the start of "Goethes lezte Nacht in Italien": the song of the *epheboi* is carried by a wind from the south — in itself a significant image — "über das schlummernde land und die raunende see" (9:8). While the elemental force of the sea is able to transmit the music of the song, the land is still slumbering in anticipation of its coming awakening. The most effective art, George wrote in a prose piece, is that which is aware of a hidden cultural heritage that will shortly be renewed: "kunst . . . in der man das atemholen neuer noch schlafender geister spürt" (17:69).[62]

The sense of an "Endzeit" lies heavily upon George's later poetry. Even if Maximin freed him personally from the all-pervading "endes-hauch"

(6/7:99), he continued to share with his contemporaries "Die ahnung dass am tor das end schon harrt" (6/7:178). In "Geheimes Deutschland," the contemporary world is described as "Endes- und todesbereich" (9:49) and the war is seen as a time when "Erkrankte welten fiebern sich zu ende" (9:24); evidence of the spiritual decay of the age is given throughout the "Zeitgedichte" and the "Tafeln" of *Der Siebente Ring*. The sense of a coming day of reckoning is still more marked in *Der Stern des Bundes* (see "Richttag," 8:38; "hohe zeit," 8:40), and forms the background to the second decade of the first book, which begins with the words of divine wrath condemning the age (8:28). Together with the vision recorded here (8:32), a context is provided for the prophecy of "der heilige krieg" — clearly not a call to arms, but, given that it is paralleled with "holy madness" and "holy plague," a warning of imminent disaster, which is "heilig," that is, sent by heaven. The picture of future havoc includes the collapse of tall buildings, those symbols of the modern world (8:31). In this atmosphere of "Weltabend," the only hope offered is that a later generation may win life from the ruins of the present time (8:35).

Edith Landmann recorded George's view of the possible renewal of the world in these words: "Es gibt zwei Möglichkeiten: entweder es gibt eine friedliche Durchdringung vom Geistigen her, eine Erneuerung von innen heraus, oder es muss alles erst zugrunde gehen, bevor ein Neues entsteht. Beides ist in der Geschichte vorgekommen."[63] The latter possibility is reflected in the poem for six voices "Der Brand des Tempels" (9:61–69), which shows a barbarian age succeeding a dead culture, the chief symbol of which, its temple, is destroyed. We learn that half a thousand years will pass before it is rebuilt. The question whether this prophecy gives a glimmer of hope for the future is irrelevant;[64] the poet is describing the necessary course of history, and, taking a thousand years as a full cycle, shows that at its midpoint, when the now–newly arrived barbarian regime has settled down into what will be an increasingly decadent culture, the temple will be rebuilt. The conqueror's work of destroying "was fallreif war" (9:26) is a necessary work of fate. The rumors of the love of the princess Pamfilia for JLI are clearly not baseless: the last dream of a decadent civilization is that it might preserve its treasures by making common cause with the conqueror and bringing about a marriage of new and old ways; but JLI is adamant that a new age can only rise upon the ruins of the old. Any possibility of an alternative, of new growth from within the decadent culture, is absent: the memory of the old, mad king setting plants into the parched earth shows that there is no possibility of regenerative growth from within the kingdom.

The first possibility, that of "eine Erneuerung von innen heraus," is suggested in very different ways in two other poems of *Das Neue Reich*. The idea of revolution from within can be linked to the figure of the criminal — that is, someone who distinguishes himself, as elite groups will,

from the values of the surrounding society. This idea unites certain groups and individuals in George's poetry (see 3:50–51, 5:45, 6/7:54–55 and 182), and finds its fullest expression in the poem "Der Gehenkte" (9:51–52). This apparently negative figure, who might seem at an opposite extreme from the passive figure of the seer, is presented in positive terms. Although he has in some way challenged the values of his society and has been cut off from it (his specific crime is obviously irrelevant to the poem), the hanged man foretells that he will continue to work through the society that excluded him, invading their minds and becoming, in the future, a hero, even a god; thus although in the present he has been made an outsider, his long-term effect will be from within society.

Still further removed from human society is the figure of the faun in "Der Mensch und der Drud" (9:53–56), and yet he too is revealed as an unacknowledged part of it. This poem, which incidentally should be regarded as dispelling the extraordinarily persistent myth that George was hostile to nature, brings together most of the ideas associated with the secret kingdom in George's work. The hunter lists the achievements of humankind in such a way as to attract our criticism, while the faun refers constantly to images of the hidden kingdom. In this poem two aspects of George's later poetry that we have traced mingle clearly: criticism of the present time and the vision of future regeneration. The faun represents hidden forces that men do not ordinarily encounter, and from the hunter's perspective he is an "überbleibsel grauser wildnis"; on the other hand it is suggested that at some future stage the faun may have a more active role to play, since he tells the hunter "Zur rechten weile ist dein walten gut": that is to say, the civilization that the hunter represents is only a phase in the movement of history.

The setting of the meeting between the two speakers is symbolically significant: the hunter has climbed up the stream to the point where a waterfall marks the frontier between his world and the world of untamed nature. The hunter's threat, "Der weg ist dir verlegt," places him from the first in an ironic light, for in reality it is his path that is blocked by the waterfall and by the faun.[65] The hunter is an armed destroyer in a realm of inviolate nature, "in waldgebirgen"; as an explorer he is a threat to the secret kingdom, for at the head of the stream he has been following rises the hidden spring of which the faun later speaks, an ultimate mystery that represents the source of life. The dangers of human destruction and human inquisitiveness for the secret realm are spelled out at the start of "Geheimes Deutschland"; both attitudes are personified in the hunter who threatens the faun with his weapon and challenges him: "verbirg auch nichts!" The man's catalogue of human achievements represents all the evils of the modern world George has attacked elsewhere. He regards it as a victory of the human spirit that the "unfruchtbaren hochwald" has been cut down and turned over to cultivation, and that the cornfield has replaced the swamp.

We know from "Geheimes Deutschland" that primeval forests are anything but unfruitful, except to the superficial eye of an acquisitive civilization. The image the man uses to describe the new towns, "städte blühn," is again an ironic touch, emphasizing precisely the difference between the organic world and man's sterile material achievements; the ultimate achievement of the man's culture is high buildings, an image that, as we have seen, George uses to attack the hubris and lifelessness of the modern world. Though not all forests have been destroyed, those that have been preserved have been set aside for hunting. Even the sea and the ravine, areas of fruitful mystery, have been explored and exploited. The values of light and order to which the hunter finally appeals are not necessarily positive (see "verbriefte ordnung," 9:24); the opening of "Geheimes Deutschland" uses cold and harsh light as an image of scientific enquiry that exposes and destroys all the hidden places of the earth (9:46).

These criticisms are also brought out through the dialogue form of the poem. While the hunter dismisses the faun as useless, the faun speaks of his work in sustaining the secret life of nature. While the hunter speaks of "grauser wildnis," the faun points to the life-giving force of untamed nature. While the man mocks the "zuchtlos spiel" of the faun, the other reveals a life of patient service. Derided as "ein weit niedrer," the faun shows his power, and it is he who dominates the conversation and finally sends the hunter back to his own world. When the hunter appeals to the gods as a higher power than the faun, the latter teaches him that man can only know the gods through mediators — which in fact, although he is clearly linked to "die Untren" rather than to "die Himmlischen," could apply to the faun himself. The faun's warning is ultimately similar to that in "Geheimes Deutschland": that modern man's acquisitive and destructive tendencies will result in his own destruction if he violates the secrets of life. Finally the hunter is reduced to abuse and threats.

The faun is neither man nor animal, but a link between the two worlds who, at a time of destructive human domination, takes the part of the hidden powers of nature; his association with the human world is guaranteed by his beneficial work for humans, and his visible similarity to them. His ugliness does not reflect a negative judgment on him by the poet;[66] nor on the other hand does it suggest that for George beauty was no longer an important criterion.[67] This is simply how unformed and untamed nature would appear to the insensitive champion of "licht" and "ordnung," and we only have the hunter's word for his ugliness.

Despite the criticism of the hunter that a study of this poem reveals, it would be mistaken to see George as a complete enemy of modern civilization, or as an advocate of a return to nature. What he is warning against here is what he regards as the false creed of materialism, a lack of respect for the secrets of life, and the myth of progress — that progress of which, as early as 1910, a "Merkspruch" in the *Blätter für die Kunst* had foretold

that it could one day come to be equated with "raubbau," with destructive exploitation.[68] The faun not only criticizes materialism, he also lays another charge that we are familiar with against the hunter, accusing him of fruitless speculation. He is at his worst when his mind "der vieles kann in wolken sich verfängt." Man must recognize his limitations and renew his link with the simple things of life, above all with the past, knotting anew the "zersplissnen goldnen fäden" (8:33). The processes of life are cyclical and complementary, not a matter of linear progress: to the hunter's "pfeilgeradem willen" (8:25), the faun has opposed a magic ring of hidden forces. His last line carries a continuing theme of George's late poetry: "Nur durch den zauber bleibt das leben wach."

The concentration on George's poetry in this essay has sought to make clear that it does not make political statements, not does it offer precise contours of a Secret Germany. Rather than speculate about an unknowable future, it concentrates rather on the preservation of past values, lending expression to them through language; in that sense members of the Circle are those who speak the same language. If we look back from George's late poetry to the ideas he was expressing in the years before 1900, we find reference to a larger kingdom implied in his evocation in the *Blätter für die Kunst* of 1896 of the "Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation" — ninety years after its dissolution.[69] The turn from a wider European perspective towards Germany, which is marked in *Der Teppich des Lebens*, already represents a limiting of that horizon, even though, as we have seen, Mediterranean images retain their importance for the later George. The circle itself, as idea and reality, is a further concentration of scope, and notions such as "Schatz" and "Kleinod," while, as noted above, they are more than simple metaphors for works of art, narrow the focus yet more. At the smallest level we find the "Samenkorn," the grain of seed-corn with potential for growth, which can be identified with the poetic word itself, the "lebengebende Wort" that George discerned in the poetry of Hölderlin (17: 59).

In "Der Mensch und der Drud'" the power of the poetic word is implied by the links between the faun and other kinds of guardian figures. The poem offers an image of the secret realm, which for George contains the precious treasure of past traditions as well as the seeds of the future. During an age in which the past cannot yet be renewed, the seer must tend the sacred fire (see 9:29); the faun, a type of the shepherd, must guard the secret spring. The poem therefore offers a confrontation between two archetypes of human activity, hunter and shepherd. In other late poems the shepherd-figure is seen to preserve valuable truth in his song (9:101); in Germany, where the "schalmeien der schäfer" seem to have long been silent (9:43), the music of the shepherd's pipe still sounds, unheard by all but a few, in secret places (9:26), guaranteeing a future golden age, which may come to birth through "eines knaben stillem flötenlied" (6/7:7).

George is addressing a distant future when he writes in his introduction to the last series of the *Blätter für die Kunst*: "Nur den wenigen dürfte es einleuchten dass in der dichtung eines volkes sich seine lezten schicksale enthüllen."[70]

Notes

[1] Carola Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung: Das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890–1933* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997), 16.

[2] Gert Mattenklott, Michael Philipp, and Julius H. Schoeps, eds., *Verkannte Brüder? Stefan George und das deutsch-jüdische Bürgertum zwischen Jahrhundertwende und Emigration* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2001); Wolfgang Braungart, Ute Oelmann, and Bernhard Böschenstein, eds., *Stefan George: Werk und Wirkung seit dem "Siebenten Ring"* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001); Bernhard Böschenstein, Jürgen Egyptien, Bertram Schefold, and Wolfgang Graf Vitzthum, eds., *Wissenschaftler im George-Kreis: Die Welt des Dichters und der Beruf der Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); Roman Köster, Werner Plumpe, Bertram Schefold, and Korinna Schönhärl, eds., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens und die Wirklichkeit der Weimarer Republik. Vorstellungen von Staat und Gemeinschaft im George-Kreis* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009); see also Bruno Pieger and Bertram Schefold, eds., *Stefan George: Dichtung, Ethos, Staat* (Berlin: Verlag Berlin-Brandenburg, 2010).

[3] Manfred Frank, "Stefan Georges 'neuer Gott,'" in *Gott im Exil: Vorlesungen über die Neue Mythologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), 257–314.

[4] Frank, "Stefan Georges 'neuer Gott," 286.

[5] Quoted in Michael Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer? Zur Wirkung Stefan Georges im "Dritten Reich"* (Marburg: Tectum, 1995), 88. Petrow's sober account remains a valuable source.

[6] Eckhard Heftrich, *Stefan George* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1968), 131.

[7] Compare, for example, Peter Hoffmann, *Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg und seine Brüder* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1992) and Manfred Riedel, *Geheimes Deutschland: Stefan George und die Brüder Stauffenberg* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006). See also Wolfgang Graf Vitzthum, "Weimarer Republik und Völkerbund aus der Sicht von Berthold Graf Stauffenberg," in Köster et al., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens*, 211–34.

[8] Robert E. Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and his Circle* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002); Thomas Karlauf, *Stefan George: Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Karl Blessing, 2007).

[9] See, for example, Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 186–87, 584–85.

[10] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 775.

[11] Karlauf, *Stefan George*. The quotation comes from Edith Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1963), 197.

[12] E. Landmann, *Gespräche*, 87.
[13] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 12, 66, 231, 341, 500.
[14] *SW*, 6/7:30–31. Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text with volume and page numbers.
[15] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 366, 494.
[16] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 547.
[17] Katharina and Momme Mommsen, "'Ihr kennt eure Bibel nicht': Bibel- und Horaz-Anklänge in Stefan Georges Gedicht 'Der Krieg,'" *Castrum Peregrini* 170 (1985): 42–69, especially 64–67.
[18] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 744 and 746; see also 393 and 405.
[19] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 585, 579, 639.
[20] Klaus Landfried, *Stefan George: Politik des Unpolitischen* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1975), 19.
[21] *Castrum Peregrini* 250 (2001). This issue of the periodical, entitled *Im Zeichen von Stefan George. Lektüre seiner Dichtung*, offers interpretations of seventeen George poems.
[22] Wolfgang Braungart, *Ästhetischer Katholizismus: Stefan Georges Rituale der Literatur* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997).
[23] See Bertram Schefold, introduction to *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens,* ed. Köster et al., ix–xl; also the article by Bruno Pieger, "Menschliche Gemeinschaft oder 'Das Leben in Gedichten'" in Köster et al., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens*, 151–69.
[24] Gerhard Plumpe, "Die Idee des 'schönen Lebens' im Kontext der Avantgarde," in Köster et al., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens*, 65–76; here, 76 and 71.
[25] Dirk von Petersdorff, "Wie viel Freiheit braucht die Dichtung? 'Das Zeitgedicht' im 'Siebenten Ring,'" *George-Jahrbuch* 5 (2004/2005): 45–62.
[26] Robert E. Norton, "Das schöne Leben als ethisches Ideal," in Köster et al., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens*, 123–34; here, 133.
[27] I shall use the terms "kingdom" and "realm" interchangeably for the German word "Reich."
[28] Ernst Morwitz, *Kommentar zu dem Werk Stefan Georges*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1969), 334 and 329, takes "gift" to mean "music"; Kurt Hildebrandt, *Das Werk Stefan Georges* (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell, 1960), 322 and 319, takes it to mean narcotic and sensual pleasures. Both interpret "zerstreuung" literally. My reading is supported by George's use of the word "gift" in other contexts.
[29] Vitzthum, "Weimarer Republik und Völkerbund," 220.
[30] J. M. M. Aler, *Im Spiegel der Form: Stilkritische Wege zur Deutung von Stefan Georges Maximindichtung* (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger, 1947), 40–42.
[31] Wolfgang Christian Schneider, "Staat und Kreis, Dienst und Glaube: Friedrich Wolters und Robert Boehringer in ihren Vorstellungen von Gesellschaft," in Köster et al., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens*, 97–122; here, 112, sees all three of the opening poems of this book as closely related, as does Morwitz, *Kommentar*, 380.
[32] Morwitz, *Kommentar*, 381.
[33] See the note by Ute Oelmann, *SW*, 8:144.

[34] For Schneider, "Staat und Kreis, Dienst und Glaube," 112, they are symbols of kingship. For other different readings of the poem, see the contributions by Ernst Merz and Rudolf Eilhard respectively to a volume of interpretations of individual poems, *Castrum Peregrini* 35 (1957–58), 74–77 and 81–83.

[35] Aler, *Im Spiegel der Form*, 241–42 notes how this poem, by contrast with its predecessor, stresses the rejection of nature. The significance of "hain" will be discussed below.

[36] Morwitz, *Kommentar*, 395 takes "in ihr" to refer to the word "krönungszahl" of the previous line, but a more obvious sense is given if it refers to "allheit."

[37] For the dating of this poem, *SW*, 9:146.

[38] Despite that implication, the image of the promised land is one that occurs positively in connection with Maximin in *Der Siebente Ring* (*SW*, 6/7:100 and 113).

[39] It is ironic that Rudolf Borchardt, in his review of *Der Siebente Ring*, should accuse George of impossibly bad taste for trying to fit a line of old French into his iambics, since the line here constructed, or half-remembered, precisely fits both George's own meter and the metrical conventions of the epic: Rudolf Borchardt, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6, *Prosa I* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1957), 266.

[40] E. Landmann, *Gespräche*, 35, 58.

[41] See also the early poem in *Die Fibel* (*SW*, 9:33) and the background to "Die törichte Pilgerin" (*SW*, 9:105).

[42] Albert Verwey, *Mein Verhältnis zu Stefan George* (Strassburg: Heitz, 1936), 25–26.

[43] The image is also used in *Der Stern des Bundes*: see *SW*, 8:35.

[44] On the dating of these poems, see *SW*, 9:129 and 131.

[45] Christoph Fricker, "Stefan Georges Gedicht 'Geheimes Deutschland': ein politisches Programm?," in *Stefan George: Dichtung, Ethos, Staat*, ed. Pieger and Schefold.

[46] Karl Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst und die neueste Literatur," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 1 (1910): 1–18; here, 14.

[47] *Stefan George-Friedrich Gundolf: Briefwechsel*, ed. Robert Boehringer with Georg Peter Landmann (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1962), 230.

[48] Norbert von Hellingrath, *Hölderlin-Vermächtnis* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1936), 124, 125, 148.

[49] Robert Boehringer, *Mein Bild von Stefan George*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1967), 129.

[50] See Eckhart Grünewald, "'Übt an uns mord und reicher blüht was blüht!': Ernst Kantorowicz spricht am 14. November 1933 über das 'Geheime Deutschland,'" *George-Jahrbuch* 5 (2000/2001): 131–75.

[51] See, for example, Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister: Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 409–27: the author's arch lampooning of George and his world not only consigns the notion of "geheimes Deutschland" to the lumber-room of "art-religions" but hints that the linking of Stauffenberg's last words to

George was a legend contrived — he is uncertain whether to present them as ballet dancers, football players, or weavers — by Edgar Salin and Marion Gräfin Donhöff.

[52] Ute Oelmann's suggestion (*SW*, 9:150) that it dates from the same period as "Burg Falkenstein," i.e., after August 1922, makes good sense (as against Salin's suggestion of prewar composition), even though the "dateable" elements in the poem all belong to the prewar period.

[53] Vitzthum, "Weimarer Republik und Völkerbund," 215.

[54] It is important to the early drama *Manuel* (see the *Schlussband* of *GA*, 8:12–13 and 19); to various figures in the *Bücher* (see *SW*, 3:20, 21, 50–51); and to four figures celebrated in the "Zeitgedichte" of *Der Siebente Ring*: Mallarmé, Klein, Sophie von Alencon and above all Clement Harris. In the "Gestalten" different kinds of sacrifice are presented, that of Menes after he has met Manuel (*SW*, 6/7:42) and that of "Der Minner," whose self-giving love is a sacrifice for the community (*SW*, 6/7:41).

[55] Ray Ockenden, "Mensch und Natur in der Dichtung Stefan Georges," in Pieger and Schefold, *Stefan George: Dichtung, Ethos, Staat*.

[56] Morwitz, *Kommentar*, 203, maintains that George had not seen Vesuvius at this time, but it is possible that he visited Naples in April 1898: see *ZT*, 76.

[57] Landmann, *Gespräche*, 76.

[58] This understanding of "graun" is given by Claus Victor Bock in his *Wortkonkordanz zur Dichtung Stefan Georges* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1964), 243; and by Morwitz, *Kommentar*, 437–38. Although *WSG*, 370 offers "the exquisite shudder" as a translation, the first edition of *The Works of Stefan George rendered into English,* trans. Olga Marx and Ernst Morwitz (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1949), 302 speaks of "unhurried dawns" — surely also a possible reading.

[59] Rudolf Eilhard in *Castrum Peregrini,* no. 35 (1957–58): 82. Claude David, *Stefan George: Son oeuvre poétique* (Lyon: IAC, 1952), 330, holds the contrary view that they are to "forget" their origins.

[60] This is the view of Morwitz, *Kommentar*, 224.

[61] According to Hansjürgen Linke, *Das Kultische in der Dichtung Stefan Georges und seiner Schule*, vol. 1 (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1960), 96, the Madonna was painted by the Veronica-Meister (correcting Morwitz, *Kommentar*, 325).

[62] This image encourages me to feel that the dating offered by Morwitz of the piece in question, "Über Dichtung II," at some time between 1904 and 1915 — see Ernst Morwitz, *Kommentar zu den Prosa-, Drama- und Jugend-Dichtungen Stefan Georges* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1962), 65 — is more likely than that of 1895 suggested by Ute Oelmann (*SW*, 17:125).

[63] Landmann, *Gespräche*, 70.

[64] This is the suggestion of Edgar Salin, *Um Stefan George: Erinnerung und Zeugnis*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals George Bondi, 1954), 272.

[65] In view of the symbolic nature of the setting, its details are important. The faun does not "appear" to the hunter (David, *Stefan George*, 363); the hunter discovers him, guarding the borders of his world.
[66] Paul Gerhard Klussmann, *Stefan George: Zum Selbstverständnis der Kunst und des Dichters in der Moderne* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1961), 109–10. Klussmann concludes that nature remains even for the later George "das ganz 'Andre.'"
[67] David, *Stefan George*, 129. It is not easy to see how David arrives at his conclusion that the poem suggests that men should domesticate creatures like the faun and lend them human features, for otherwise one day man may find himself worshipping them (363).
[68] Stefan George, "Diese und jene Welt," repr. in *Einleitungen und Merksprüche der Blätter für die Kunst*, ed. Stefan George Stiftung (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1964), 50.
[69] George, "Diese und jene Welt," 17.
[70] George, "Diese und jene Welt," 58.

6: The Absentee Prophet: Public Perceptions of George's Poetry in the Weimar Period

David Midgley

When Stefan George died in December 1933, an obituary appeared in the exile journal *Das neue Tagebuch*, which is remarkable for both its judicious respect and its trenchant critique. The author was the prominent liberal essayist Ludwig Marcuse, and the article began as follows:

> Wenn heute alle Deutschen, die um den Dichter Stefan George trauern, an seinem frischen Grabe sich versammeln würden, so würde eine seltsam-bunte Trauergesellschaft zusammenkommen. Die erbittertsten Feinde würden hier nebeneinander stehen und sich empört fragen, mit welchem Recht eigentlich der Nachbar es wagt, sich zu diesem Toten zu bekennen. Müßte dann aber jeder Trauergast in einem hochnotpeinlichen Verhör das Motiv seiner Liebe zu dem Verstorbenen eindeutig bekennen, so würde wohl nur noch eine kleine Gruppe von Jüngern an seinem Sarge zurückbleiben. Denn er war ein Kaiser ohne Volk.[1]

Marcuse himself should be numbered unreservedly among the admirers of Stefan George's poetry. He had ensured that due homage was paid to George and his Circle in the compendious publication on contemporary world literature he edited in 1924;[2] and in his obituary, too, he stresses the new impulse that George's poetry had provided in the 1890s, with its controlled passion and solemnity. Like many others, both before and since, he writes appreciatively of George's verses as the most enchanting since Goethe's day. But in Marcuse's characterization of George the writer, the main emphasis lies on his silence: on his refusal of public honors and his implicit rejection of the admiration of all but his closest disciples. He summarizes George's accomplishment as follows:

> Gewiß war es sein Verdienst, daß er dem deutschen Bürgertum im Jahrzehnt vor dem Weltkrieg jenes verpflichtende Bild der kultivierten Persönlichkeit vorhielt, das die anarchische Roheit der Besitzenden zu läutern suchte. Aber es ist verständlich, wenn auch vielleicht nicht für George, daß seine Gedichte die wirklichen Kaiser

> im Osten, in der Mitte und im Westen Deutschlands nicht weiter störten; daß seine gedichteten Predigten Sensationen schöngeistiger Salons oder schwärmender Jünglinge blieben: er predigte abseits von der Zeit. Er war ein großer Erzieher — für exklusive, prima Bürgerkreise, deren Söhne Geld genug hatten, sich mit einem heimlichen Kaiser begnügen zu können. Sein Reich kam nie — weil er im Grunde nie eins wollte.[3]

Marcuse's article neatly encapsulates the tension that is frequently apparent in the public discussions of George during the period of the Weimar Republic. It is no doubt a reflection of the underlying uncertainties and anxieties of the Weimar period that these discussions often give voice to a yearning for moral guidance on the one hand, and to a sense of disappointment at a promise unfulfilled on the other. George's self-inflicted remoteness from the everyday world — the world of the "eiler und gaffer," as he puts it in the poem "Geheimes Deutschland"[4] — meant, as Thomas Karlauf confirms in his recent biography of George, that even those for whom his poetry had been inspirational before the First World War tended to think of all that as a thing of the past.[5] While George himself reinforced that perception after 1918 by cleaving to his prewar values and withdrawing to the position of a detached observer unconcerned with the issues of day-to-day politics,[6] what did continue to fascinate and provide a bone of contention in the 1920s was the model of his austere personality and code of living as an alternative to the world of industrial capitalism. The sense in which this aspect of his influence was itself subject to changing circumstances is, however, indicated by the publication statistics for George's poetry, which show a surge of interest during the years of turmoil immediately following the First World War, 1918 through 1922, and a tailing-off after that.[7]

Many tributes to George appeared in the cultural journals of the 1920s, particularly on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday in 1928. They include some essays by genuine literary scholars, such as Conrad Wandrey, the young Heinrich Lützeler, and — in more critical vein — Fritz Strich,[8] and many by regular contributors to the bourgeois press, including fervently nationalist and denominational journals.[9] One looks in vain for similarly substantial discussions in left-wing journals such as *Die Weltbühne*; and there is evidence from the early 1920s that George was viewed by some as one of those monuments of a past era that deserved only to be toppled from its pedestal under the Republic. Hans Knudsen, a regular reviewer for *Die schöne Literatur*, deemed it necessary in 1921 to defend George against the sweeping denunciations to be found in Kurt Port's pamphlet of 1919, "Stefan George: Ein Protest";[10] and in an earlier review of Will Scheller's *Stefan George: Ein deutscher Lyriker* (1918), Knudsen had already noted the pervasive effects of a journalistic obfuscation of George's reputation, speaking of an "im Publikum durch journalistische Afterkritik

genährte Vorstellung mysteriöser Bemäntelung."[11] But authors who are manifestly appreciative of George's poetic achievement, and who present his emblematic status for German cultural identity in a positive light, also tend to echo the sentiment that he belongs to a bygone age and has failed to respond adequately to the demands of the postwar world. The criticism we have seen expressed in Marcuse's obituary is already explicit in the early 1920s in the Catholic journal *Hochland*, for example, where George is recognized as a powerfully seductive rebel against a "godless age," but reproached for having withdrawn himself and his disciples from the public arena: "George hat durch eine Gewalttat sondergleichen sich und die Seinen aus der allgemeinen Zersetzung gerettet, indem er sie vom Leben der Allgemeinheit abtrennte."[12] And Hans Dahmen, in his deeply empathetic essay "Das Bild Stefan Georges" in the same journal in 1928, professes himself troubled by the question of whether George's voice had not proved ineffectual since the war.[13]

The various components that make up the public image of George in the 1920s are vividly apparent in the comments published on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday in the journal *Die literarische Welt*. I shall therefore make those contributions the initial focus for my discussion, and use these as a basis for highlighting the role that George's emblematic status played for two of the contributors to that commemorative number of *Die literarische Welt* who identified themselves particularly strongly with the new trends of the 1920s, Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin. (Benjamin's comments on George are especially interesting, since he openly acknowledges the role that George played in his own formative experience, and is clearly trying to define his cultural role in the 1920s in opposition to that of the George Circle.)[14] Finally, I shall give a brief indication of how these responses to George relate to the broader currents of cultural change in Germany during the first third of the twentieth century, taking as my starting point the concept of "aesthetic fundamentalism" as it has been applied to the George Circle by Stefan Breuer.[15]

What makes *Die literarische Welt* an appropriate publication to focus on is the fact that, like the Rowohlt Verlag that published it, it attempted to encompass the whole spectrum of cultural and ideological orientations that were competing for dominance in Weimar Germany. It responded to major anniversaries, as it did to the seriously divisive issues of the day, by inviting a cross-section of prominent figures to comment, and George's sixtieth birthday in 1928 was no exception. For its front page article it turned to Conrad Wandrey, an acknowledged expert on George, whose books on various other literary authors were widely read at the time. The image of George presented in Wandrey's essay was a commonplace one for the time, already firmly established by Will Scheller's book *Stefan George: Ein deutscher Lyriker*: it emphasized George's progression from "dichterischer Gestalter" to "heilig-nüchterner Sager," from a preoccupation with

purely aesthetic values to a concern with disciplined living and the pursuit of ethical commitment. He acknowledged that Rilke had turned out to be a more fruitful poetic model than George (as Fritz Strich had strongly argued in the *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* in 1925), and he was brutally frank about the absurdity, even allowing for the nature of the intellectual concerns and religious outlooks of George's intimate Circle, of presenting the figure of Maximin to the world as a surrogate god. He also savored the irony — overextending his syntax as he did so — in the notion that an erstwhile aesthete should now be hailed less as a model for poetic writing than as an emblem for the general intellectual culture of the times:

> Das heißt nicht, Georges überragende Persönlichkeit würde heute noch irgend in Zweifel gezogen, es sei denn von dumpfen und hämischen Köpfen. Aber wir wollen den Blick auf die seltsame, fast exzeptionelle Tatsache hinlenken, daß ein Dichter, der nur in Versbüchern sich bekundet hat und den seine Jünger, was die Ursprünglichkeit und Macht seines Wortes anlangt, über Goethe glauben erhöhen zu müssen, daß Georges Wirkung im Reich der Dichtung verschwindend gering ist gegen die tiefgreifende, die er im geistesgeschichtlichen Leben ausgelöst hat.[16]

In addition to Wandrey's essay, *Die literarische Welt* asked a number of other public figures to comment on the role George had played in their personal development. They included André Gide, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Frank Thieß, Stefan Zweig, and Ina Seidel, and their responses ranged from recollections of the inspirational effect of particular poems to brusque denials of any association at all. Figures closely associated with the George Circle (Karl Wolfskehl and Oscar A. H. Schmitz) attested to the power of his personal influence, while the DDP (German Democratic Party) politician and university professor Willy Hellpach roundly rejected the exclusivity and privileged social status of the Circle and associated the poetry with an odor of faded elegance ("Der Duft kostbarer Kranzgewinde, die in einer Gruft welken").

The Jesuit Friedrich Muckermann, a frequent contributor to Catholic journals of the time, is an example of someone who continued to uphold George's personality as a positive ethical example. He spells out the contrast between the values George stood for and the sorry appearance of humanity in the postwar world, and expresses admiration for the charismatic appeal of what he calls George's "Totalität," comparing it to the appeal of Goethe and Hölderlin. Similar sentiments had been expressed by the philosopher Max Scheler, as Wandrey notes in his essay; and in the same number of *Die literarische Welt*, the essayist Friedrich Sternthal describes George as the latest in the sequence of German thinkers who had sought to undo the effects of the Reformation and restore to society its lost sense of communal bonding, concluding indeed that this aspect of

George's message might provide contemporary Germany with a way of escaping from its subjugation to the cultural influences of America and Russia.[17]

But no less interesting is the fact that those who align themselves with one or another radical way forward dissociate themselves completely from what George represents. They include two figures who are associated with the assertion of nationalist and regionalist cultural identity against the cosmopolitanism of Berlin: Josef Ponten and Wilhelm Schäfer.[18] And they include Bertolt Brecht, who reproaches George with self-complacency and self-inflicted isolation, and accuses him of cultivating attitudes that are more representative of his times than he would care to admit. Brecht's comment begins:

> Dieser Schriftsteller gehört zu den Erscheinungen, die wegen ihrer Isoliertheit in einer gerade für unrühmlich geltenden Zeit im Gegensatz zu dieser zu stehen scheinen und so für sich als Sympathie genießen, was eigentlich nur dieser Zeit als Antipathie zugedacht war — bis sich herausstellt, daß sie ihrem Wesen nach zu ihr gehört haben; und da die Meinungsverschiedenheiten, die man noch feststellen kann, so außerordentlich geringfügig aussehen, oder auf einem so nebensächlichen Gebiet liegen, trifft sie noch der Verdacht, lediglich ihre Eitelkeit und ihre Herrschsucht habe sie isoliert.[19]

He adds that he expects the opinion survey of *Die literarische Welt* to establish that George's influence on the young generation of 1928 is insignificant, speaks of George as a "Müßiggänger" rather than a true visionary, and summarizes what he sees as the self-contradictory character of George's public stance as follows: "Die Säule, die sich dieser Heilige ausgesucht hat, ist mit zuviel Schlauheit ausgesucht, sie steht an einer zu volkreichen Stelle, sie bietet einen zu malerischen Anblick." The editor of *Die literarische Welt* had judiciously excised an opening sentence in which Brecht described the very commemoration of George's sixtieth birthday as a reactionary event, but one from which — for that very reason — he did not wish to absent himself: "Nach einer kurzen Verstimmung darüber, daß es George nicht gelungen ist, wenigstens seinen sechzigsten Geburtstag zu verheimlichen, beeile ich mich, Ihnen zu antworten, da ich meine, bei gewissen reaktionären Veranstaltungen keinesfalls fehlen zu dürfen."[20]

Brecht was at this time clearly trying to position himself as the leading poet and playwright of the young generation, and did not like to miss an opportunity to cast aspersions on everything for which the older generation stood. Having passed through a George phase in his teenage years, Brecht now saw him as a preeminent target for repudiation.[21] In the same journal the previous year, 1927, he had caused a furor by dismissing all the poems submitted for a competition as unusable, and by specifically naming George, Rilke, and Werfel as poets for whose example he had no high

regard.[22] In a private note, apparently written in response to a published critical comment on his judgment, he went on to reflect that of course there were criteria other than "usefulness" that could be applied to lyric poetry, and that the experience of the First World War had presented particular reasons for making oneself "useful." In this connection he again makes explicit reference to Stefan George. The image he uses on this occasion is pointedly at variance with the epithets customarily applied to George (with or without irony), such as "Meister" or "Herrscher"; but it is one that points to the ethical impulse in George's writings that others had noted as a more salient feature of his poetry since the First World War, while also implying a more down-to-earth, perhaps even a low-ironic perspective on that very ethical pretention. Brecht imagines George as — potentially — a kind of moral policeman, and again he emphasizes the damaging effect of his self-willed isolation:

> Ich will Stefan George nicht für den Weltkrieg verantwortlich machen. Aber ich sehe keinen Grund dafür, daß er sich isolierte. Ich denke, daß dieser naive Weise allen Gleichgesinnten zeigen wollte, daß er seinesgleichen nicht hatte. Nach einer flüchtigen Untersuchung seines Schönheitswertes mußte ich zu dem Resultat gelangen, daß man von ihm Polizeidienste verlangen könne. Und für einen Polizisten ist eine rein genießende Stellungnahme im Mittelpunkt weitverzweigter Verbrechen nicht die gegebene. Ein Polizist ist nicht dazu da, auf seinem Gesicht gewisse widerstreitende Empfindungen einfach zu registrieren.[23]

He concludes, without unequivocally adopting a Marxist viewpoint, that the aesthetic mode of which George's poetry is representative is too heavily imbued with the aspect of class struggle from above.[24]

Among those who contributed to the anniversary number of *Die literarische Welt* in 1928, the most fascinating case to consider is that of Walter Benjamin. He manages to combine a firm rejection of the ethos of the George Circle with sympathy for their aesthetic sensibilities, and this ambivalent position relates to important moments in his own intellectual development. To start with, communal readings of George's poetry, as well as of writings by Spitteler and Kierkegaard, had been part of Benjamin's formative experience at the boarding school of Haubinda, and had helped to shape the sense of values by which his generation revolted against that of their parents. While he was at pains to distance himself from George in the 1920s, it is clear that he took a keen interest in the writings of the George Circle on art (Gundolf around 1920, Klages and Kommerell around 1930),[25] and it has been suggested that the conception of the "aura" of a work of art, which is central to Benjamin's view of the historical development of art, owes something to them.[26] When Benjamin began to make his way as an essayist and publicist in the 1920s, he conceived his

own activities as in competition with those of the George Circle, describing his association with Hofmannsthal's *Neue deutsche Blätter* in a letter to Gershom Scholem, for example, as an opportunity to attack the ideology of the George school from a vantage point that they would be unable to ignore:

> In schriftstellerischer Hinsicht ist dieser Erscheinungsmodus, als in der bei weitem exklusivsten der hiesigen Zeitschriften für mich überaus wertvoll. In akademischer Hinsicht wäre ein anderer vielleicht günstiger aber nicht ebenso möglich gewesen. Was aber die publizistische Wirkung betrifft, so ist dieser Ort für meinen Angriff auf die Ideologie der Schule von George geradezu der gegebene. Vielleicht nur an diesem einzigen Ort dürfte es liegen, wenn es ihr schwer fallen sollte, die Invektive zu ignorieren.[27]

Perhaps it is in the nature of such intellectual rivalries that Benjamin's projects show signs both of being conceived in opposition to the George Circle and of sharing something of their self-conception. When Benjamin wrote the announcement for the journal *Angelus Novus*, which he proposed to launch in 1922, he emphasized the need for such a venture to demonstrate an awareness of its historical situation, and in that context he embraced the principle of ephemerality, but in terms that show how the example of the George Circle remained an important point of reference for him. He emphatically rejects the notion of a community of authors held together by a common ideology,[28] and he explicitly asserts that the influence of Stefan George has passed into history:

> Täuscht nicht alles, so hat eine gefährliche, in jedem Sinne entscheidende Zeit für die deutsche Dichtung seit der Jahrhundertwende begonnen . . . Seitdem Georges Wirken in seiner letzten Bereicherung deutschen Sprachgutes historisch zu werden beginnt, scheint ein neuer Thesaurus deutscher Dichtersprache das Erstlingswerk jedes jüngern Autors zu bilden. Und so wenig von einer Schule erwartet werden darf, deren nachhaltigste Wirkung bald darin gesehen werden wird, aufdringlich eines großen Meisters Grenzen dargetan zu haben, so wenig läßt die offenkundige Mechanik allerneuester Produktion Zutrauen zu der Sprache ihrer Dichter fassen.[29]

In his biography of Benjamin, Momme Brodersen also makes a plausible case for regarding Benjamin's policy on translation as, in part, a controversy with the attitudes and practices of Stefan George.[30]

Benjamin's most substantial essay on George, the "Rückblick" of 1933, needs to be read with particular caution.[31] It takes the form of a review of two new studies of George,[32] appearing in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on the occasion of George's sixty-fifth birthday in July 1933, when the Nazi regime was already well consolidated, and it appeared under a pseudonym. The essay begins in ambiguous terms: Stefan George has

fallen silent, but "we" have developed a new ear for his voice (the essay leaves it unclear what circumstances have brought that change about, and also who is understood to be included in that community of listeners). It states that George's voice has come to appear prophetic, not in the sense that George foretold historical developments — that is the task of the politician — but in the sense that he had spoken with the voice of moral censure: the role of a prophet, Benjamin writes, is to foretell the "Strafgerichte" that will be visited upon a nation. And the essay links this notion in turn to the image of a "Weltnacht" descending, a theme of foreboding in George's poetry, which Benjamin sees as having become prominent in relation to the outbreak of the First World War and as extending indefinitely into the future.[33] The George biographer Thomas Karlauf, who also cites other evidence of Benjamin's continuing admiration for George's poetic achievement, is therefore surely right in his conjecture that the message Benjamin wanted to convey to the German reading public in 1933 relates to the impending prospect of a second world war, rather than to the inauguration of the Third Reich, as the fulfillment of George's prophecy.[34] But in the body of the article, as before, Benjamin speaks both of the solace George had offered young readers at the turn of the century, and of the sense in which he must now be viewed historically, as a "Vollender der Decadence." He casts doubt on the efficacy of the symbolism — the secret signs — in George's poetry, and he explicitly denounces the weakness of a project for life reform that conceives social contradictions in terms of tragically inescapable tensions, and that strove for "die Erneuerung des menschlichen Lebens . . ., ohne die des öffentlichen zu bedenken."[35]

The broad sentiments of Benjamin's 1933 essay, then, confirm the general trend in attitudes towards the George Circle that we have noticed in the comments of others during the Weimar period; and both the historical perspective and the implied moral critique of Benjamin's assessment are perpetuated in the conception of "aesthetic fundamentalism" as Stefan Breuer expounds it in his book of that title.[36] What Breuer describes is a tendency developing at the end of the nineteenth century that sought to sustain a vision of integral culture, and an integral ideal of the human, that was itself generated and defined in opposition to the emerging characteristics of industrial society. In particular, that tendency was opposed to the functionalism and relativism associated with an analytical, scientific approach to understanding the world. It saw capitalism, or "mammonism," as a self-consumption of the vital forces that generate "culture," and as the surrender of the human to the mechanistic system of the money economy (in this respect there are manifest affinities with the thinking of Georg Simmel and Werner Sombart). It therefore also opposed the emancipation of the masses (as a process promoted by liberal industrialism) and of women (because this threatens the security of collectively nurtured mas-

culine ideals), and it opposed the centrifugal effects of Protestantism, which it perceived to be associated with the "spirit of capitalism" (and here there are obvious affinities with the thinking of Max Weber).

Breuer's vision of cultural-historical development is drawn in broad and rather all-embracing terms, and his discussion of the tensions within that broad picture sometimes tends to revel in the vibrancy of contradiction rather than to argue out the tensions to a point of resolution. The need to differentiate among the particular aesthetic effects of George's poems in relation to that broad historical sweep has been brought out well in a recent article by Dirk von Petersdorff.[37] But the fact that Breuer's concept of aesthetic fundamentalism encompasses the attitudes of George's rivals, notably Rudolf Borchardt and Hofmannsthal, as well as those of his Circle, at least acknowledges the distinction between cultural philosophies determined primarily by aesthetic concerns on the one hand, and the political agendas of fascism, neonationalism, and "conservative revolution" (in the overtly political sense in which that term is now most commonly used) on the other. When the cultural outlook Breuer defines as aesthetic fundamentalism is compared with the dominant cultural trends of the 1920s, it becomes easier to see why the values associated with the George Circle were perceived by so many commentators at the time as having been eclipsed. In Germany after the First World War, economic and social developments were favoring functional responses to the problems of modern living, the world of leisure was turning into a mass market with the world of publishing following suit (also catering to the "New Woman"), and, more generally, the manner of social association was characterized much more by the free movement of individuals (to the cities and in the cities) than by older models of "organic" connection.[38]

In order to give at least a brief idea of the senses in which aesthetic fundamentalism was superseded under the Weimar Republic — until "Weimar culture" was superseded in its turn by a political movement inimical to both republican freedoms and the values of aesthetic fundamentalism — let me conclude by pointing to three examples of literary practice that contain an implicit criticism of the positions of the George Circle. The new poetic voice of the early 1920s, which was widely associated at the time with Brecht in particular, was emphatically vitalistic and repudiated anything that might be construed as ascetically disciplined and "life-denying," as many of the poems in Brecht's *Hauspostille* (1927) illustrate. From 1927 onwards, indeed — that is, from the time of Brecht's explicit repudiation of George — it was concerned with a disciplined adaptation to that very relativism and functionalism of modern urban living that aesthetic fundamentalism sought to combat; and here it is Brecht's 1930 collection, *Aus einem Lesebuch für Städtebewohner* that would provide appropriate examples.[39] As for the prophetic stance of a Romantic idealism that sought to preserve the integrity of "Seele" against the ana-

lytical and mechanistic reasoning of the modern world, this found its supreme ironization in Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, the first volume of which appeared in 1930, and in which the most readily identifiable targets are Ludwig Klages and Walter Rathenau, rather than Stefan George.[40] Finally, there were changes in the magazine culture of the 1920s that provide strong indicators of the altered intellectual climate. The august old-style intellectual journals fell victim to the inflation of the early 1920s — as indeed did Benjamin's project for *Angelus Novus* — and what replaced them was much more market orientated, sensitive to the diversity of readers' interests, and alert to current affairs. *Die literarische Welt*, for example, was published weekly in newspaper format, rather than as a monthly pamphlet. And perhaps the most piquant illustration of the sense in which the new style of the mid-1920s, with its flair for intellectual fashion and its conscious self-irony, set itself up in contrast with the old is the career of *Der Querschnitt*, which began in 1921 as an art dealers' newsletter and was relaunched in 1924 as one of the pioneer glossies.[41] It enjoyed considerable cachet amongst intellectuals of the time, and both Walter Benjamin and Karl Wolfskehl published in it. But the clear indication that it was conceived as catering to a radically altered cultural world is the fact that it presented itself on its title page as a "Magazin der *aktuellen* Ewigkeitswerte" (my emphasis). Even "eternal values," it seems, now had to move with the times.

Ludwig Marcuse's wry observations in his obituary notice in 1933 are fully borne out, then, by the record of the public discussions of Stefan George over the previous decade: the voices that had sustained George's memory during the Weimar years had been highly disparate in character, and they had sustained that memory for diverse reasons. There were those who treasured the prophetic tone of George's later poetry in a world that had become manifestly less stable since the outbreak of the First Word War — prophetic, as Benjamin made explicit in 1933, in the sense of presenting a figure of moral authority and censure to a society that lacked a firm sense of ethical orientation. But there were also those — and Benjamin and Brecht were prominent amongst them — who emphasized, rather, that the world had moved on since 1918, and that the need for continual adjustment to the instability and dynamism of the postwar world demanded an altogether different outlook on life than the ethical or the aesthetic values for which George and his Circle had stood.

Notes

[1] Ludwig Marcuse, "Der Kaiser ohne Reich," *Das Neue Tagebuch* 1, no. 24 (1933): 574; reprinted in Marcuse, *Wie alt kann Aktuelles sein?*, ed. Dieter Lamping (Zurich: Diogenes, 1989), 62–65.

[2] See Johannes Nohl, "Stefan George und sein Kreis," in *Weltliteratur der Gegenwart: Deutschland*, vol. 1, ed. Ludwig Marcuse (Berlin: Franz Schneider, 1924), 225–322.
[3] Marcuse, "Der Kaiser," 575.
[4] *SW*, 9:45–49.
[5] Thomas Karlauf, *Stefan George: Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Karl Blessing, 2007), 506–7.
[6] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 472 and 509–10.
[7] See Hans Norbert Fügen, "Der George-Kreis in der 'dritten Generation,'" in *Die deutsche Literatur in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Wolfgang Rothe (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1974), 334–58, esp. 352.
[8] Fritz Strich, "Stefan George," *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* 39, no. 7 (1925): 542–56; Heinrich Lützeler, "Stefan George," *Die schöne Literatur* 27, no. 5 (1926): 193–207; Conrad Wandrey, "Stefan George und sein Kreis," *Deutsche Rundschau* 54 (1928): 54–69.
[9] An example of the former is Hans-Georg Opitz, "Stefan George und die deutsche Nation," *Deutsche Arbeit* 26, no. 2 (1926): 48–52; and of the latter, Hans Dahmen, "Das Bild Stefan Georges," *Hochland* 25, no. 2 (1928): 378–90. For a full bibliography of articles from the Weimar period, see Georg Peter Landmann, *Stefan George und sein Kreis: Eine Bibliographie* (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell, 1976), 102–61.
[10] "Verschiedenes," *Die schöne Literatur* 22, no. 13 (1921): 163–64.
[11] Hans Knudsen, review of *Stefan George: Ein deutscher Lyriker*, by Will Scheller, *Die schöne Literatur* 21, no. 7 (1920): 78–79.
[12] Werner Picht, "Stefan George als Richter unserer Zeit," *Hochland* 20, no. 1 (1922–23): 82–94, quoted in *Die schöne Literatur* 23, no. 23 (1922): 363–64. For the Catholic critique of George's anti-Christian attitudes, see also Hans Dahmen, "Die Religion Stefan Georges," *Hochland* 23, no. 1 (1925–26): 169–73; and Friedrich Muckermann, "Zeitgemäße Literaturfragen: Bernard Shaw, Stefan George," *Stimmen der Zeit* 112 (1927): 139–46.
[13] Dahmen, "Das Bild," 386n6: "Hat George nun nicht alle Klänge, deren er mächtig war, ausgespielt, alle Formen und Lagen, deren er fähig war, ausgelebt? Ist er nicht in Wirklichkeit dem Krieg gegenüber und seit dem Krieg verstummt?"
[14] For an assessment of how Benjamin's repudiation of George was deeply rooted in his own biography, see Günter Heintz, *Stefan George: Studien zu seiner künstlerischen Wirkung* (Stuttgart: Ernst Hauswedell, 1986), 310–45.
[15] Stefan Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus: Stefan George und der deutsche Antimodernismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995).
[16] Conrad Wandrey, "Stefan George," *Die literarische Welt* 4, no. 28 (1928): 1–2, esp. 1. A longer article by Wandrey appeared in *Deutsche Rundschau* in 1928 (see above); his Freiburg dissertation of 1910 had been published under the title *Stefan George* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1911).
[17] Friedrich Sternthal, "Zu Georges Politeia," *Die literarische Welt* 4, no. 28 (1928): 5.

[18] See Inge Jens, *Dichter zwischen rechts und links* (Munich: Piper, 1971).
[19] Bert[olt] Brecht, "Stefan Georges Stellung im deutschen Geistesleben," *Die literarische Welt* 4, no. 28 (1928): 3; see Bertolt Brecht, *Werke: Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, ed. Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, and Werner Mittenzwei, vol. 21 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992), 247. Unless otherwise stated the works of Brecht are quoted from the *Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe* (henceforth *BFA*).
[20] See *BFA*, 21:696–97. The few recorded comments on George by Brecht after this date consistently refer to him as "pontifical" and "reactionary": *BFA*, 26: 416–17.
[21] See *BFA*, 26:75.
[22] Bertolt Brecht, "Kurzer Bericht über 400 (vierhundert) junge Lyriker," *Die literarische Welt* 3, no. 5 (1927): 1; reprinted in *BFA*, 21:191–93.
[23] *BFA*, 21:193–94.
[24] *BFA*, 21:194.
[25] See Werner Fuld, *Walter Benjamin: Zwischen den Stühlen* (Munich: Hanser, 1979), 71–87; see also Walter Benjamin, "Wider ein Meisterwerk: Zu Max Kommerell; *Der Dichter als Führer in der Deutschen Klassik*," *Literarische Welt* 6, no. 33/34 (1930): 9–11, repr. in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. 3 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), 252–59.
[26] Momme Brodersen, *Walter Benjamin: A Biography* (London: Verso, 1996), 222, suggests that the source of the concept of "aura" may have been an article by Karl Wolfskehl which appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1929.
[27] Walter Benjamin, *Briefe*, ed. Gershom Scholem and Theodor Adorno, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993), 341.
[28] Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pt. 1, 246.
[29] Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pt. 1, 242–43.
[30] Brodersen, *Walter Benjamin*, 110–14.
[31] Walter Benjamin, "Rückblick auf Stefan George," *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3: 392–99.
[32] Benjamin praises Willi Koch, *Stefan George: Weltbild, Naturbild, Menschenbild* (Halle/Saale: Niemeyer, 1933) for clarifying the nature of the phases in George's prewar writing, but he dismisses Eduard Lachmann, *Die ersten Bücher Stefan Georges: Eine Annäherung an das Werk* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1933) as merely adulatory and confined to the internal perspectives of the George Circle.
[33] Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3:392–93. George had indeed quickly distanced himself from the pervasive enthusiasm for war, to which members of his Circle succumbed, and evoked apocalyptic associations in his poetic treatment of the war: see Jürgen Egyptien, "Die Haltung Georges und des George-Kreises zum 1. Weltkrieg," in *Stefan George: Werk und Wirkung seit dem "Siebenten Ring,"* ed. Wolfgang Braungart, Ute Oelmann, Bernhard Böschenstein (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 197–212.
[34] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 628.
[35] Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3:394.
[36] Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus.*

[37] Dirk von Petersdorff, "Stefan George — ein ästhetischer Fundamentalist?" in *Wissenschaftler im George-Kreis: Die Welt des Dichters und der Beruf der Wissenschaft*, ed. Bernhard Böschenstein et al. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 49–58.
[38] See Detlev Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik: Krisenjahre der klassischen Moderne* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987), 87–190.
[39] See David Midgley, *Writing Weimar: Critical Realism in German Literature 1918–1933* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 81–94; David Midgley, "The Poet in Berlin: Brecht's City Poetry of the 1920s," in *Empedocles' Shoe: Essays on Brecht's Poetry*, ed. Tom Kuhn and Karen Leeder (London: Methuen, 2002), 89–106.
[40] Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1930); for Klages, see Renate von Heydebrand, *Die Reflexionen Ulrichs in Robert Musils Roman "Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften": Ihr Zusammenhang mit dem zeitgenössischen Denken* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1966), 133–40; for Rathenau, see Galin Tihanov, "Robert Musil in the Garden of Conservatism," in *A Companion to the Works of Robert Musil*, ed. Philip Payne, Graham Bartram, Galin Tihanov (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007), 117–48, esp. 125–38.
[41] See Christian Ferber, ed., *Der Querschnitt: Das Magazin der aktuellen Ewigkeitswerte, 1924–1933* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1981).

III: *Wissenschaft* and *Herrschaft*

7: The Platonic Politics of the George Circle: A Reconsideration

Melissa S. Lane

Introduction

That Plato became a passionate concern of Stefan George and his Circle is not in doubt. Some twenty-six books about Plato were published by members of the Circle, culminating in *Platon: Der Kampf des Geistes um die Macht* (1933) by the medical doctor and philosopher Kurt Hildebrandt. Yet even before Hildebrandt's book was published, external discussion of Plato's importance for the Circle had already begun with Franz Josef Brecht's 1929 *Platon und der George-Kreis.*[1] It is well known that Friedrich Wolters's reference to the Circle as a "staat" was a deliberate invocation of Plato's *Republic.* In particular, as Peter Hoffmann observes, it recalls the passage in Book 9, in which Socrates avers to Glaucon that it does not matter whether the state (strictly, regime or *politeia*) they have been founding in speech ever comes into being on earth, or whether it exists only in heaven as a model (*paradeigma*): it is the true country of the philosopher, and the only city that he will serve.[2] This implicit invocation of Plato underscores the evident contribution of a Platonic notion of politics to the Circle's developing conception of its own political role. Peter Hoffmann sums up the roles of Berthold von Stauffenberg and, eventually, Claus von Stauffenberg as George's executors thus: "They were the appointed heirs of the Master's Platonic 'state,' committed to the realization of the Secret Germany."[3]

Recent scholars have increasingly highlighted the significance of Plato for the Circle: Thomas Karlauf classes Plato second only to Hölderlin in his impact on the Circle's thought between 1910 and 1914, stressing the pedagogic *eros* and esoteric method drawn from him, and Teresa Orozco has situated the George Circle's appropriation of Plato in the context of a broader "Selbstfaschistisierung" of ancient philosophy and classics in German culture, tracing the commonalities between Kurt Hildebrandt's reading, in particular, and other explicitly Nazi uses of Plato.[4] Nevertheless, the precise articulation of firstly, what the Circle's conception of its political role was, and secondly, the nature and significance of the Platonic

contribution to it, have been matters of scholarly contention. I argue that light can be shed on these two points by linking them together. By developing the Platonic understanding of politics (an understanding also interpreted and built upon in Nietzsche's conception of his own politics, as Yannis Constantinides and others have argued) held by the Circle, the peculiar and distinctive nature of the Circle's own vision of politics will be clarified.[5]

Central to Platonic politics, and to the Nietzschean politics inspired by it, was the role of the founder or legislator. Central to the impact of Plato's work on Nietzsche as on the Circle was the fact that he himself combined the founding of the Academy as an educator with his work as a poet or writer, just as in his *Republic* and *Laws* he insisted that the fundamental laws of any political regime should prescribe its music, poetry, and education. Moreover, as the poet of what Kurt Hildebrandt would call the "creative power of love" in his translation of the *Symposium* — and as both the pupil of Socrates and the artist depicting his teacher's engagement with beautiful young men like Alcibiades as a springboard to the love of the beautiful — Plato united politics to love, political ambition to the cultivation of an elite *Männnerbund*.[6] Further, the Circle's widespread though not universal invocation of Socrates, as well as Plato, as avatars of spiritual and bodily unity, and of a spiritually and politically powerful *Knabenliebe*, distinguished their approach from other readings in this period that tended to contrast Socrates unfavorably with Plato, as had Nietzsche in some of his moods.[7] Thus, Plato both created and embodied the model of a founder-legislator-leader-master-poet-lover-educator, who reforms society by reforming its art, and simultaneously by inculcating new values through the erotic cultivation of an elite group of youth, as both preparatory to and constitutive of a broader political revolution. For no other figure adulated by George or the Circle could that complete claim be made.

To demonstrate this contention, I must engage with more specific previous readings of the role of Plato for the George Circle. Preceded by Brecht's book and other earlier works, an ambitious attempt to assert the significance of Plato for the Circle in recent years was made in 1971 by Kurt Weigand.[8] As his title "Von Nietzsche zu Plato" indicated, Weigand was interested in elevating Plato's significance for the Circle above that of Nietzsche — "Platon [ist] wichtiger als Nietzsche" — or, indeed, of any other source, rather than in drawing out links between them.[9] A number of points in Weigand's interpretation bear recalling. First, he stressed the pivotal roles of Hildebrandt's 1912 translation of the *Symposium* and Heinrich Friedemann's *Platon: Seine Gestalt* (1914), published shortly before the author was killed in the war. This contention was subjected to heavy criticism at the 1971 symposium on George at which Weigand's paper was originally presented and in the collection of which it appears. In the printed discussion of Weigand's paper, Eckhard Heftrich asked skepti-

cally, for example, "Ist Platon im Werk Georges deutlich greifbar oder nicht?," cautioning against confusing George's poetic work with the *Weltanschauung* of his disciples (insofar as they formed a coherent and unified Circle at all, which he also questioned), or even with that of George himself.[10] Hans-Georg Gadamer, who as a young man was influenced by the Circle, argued against Weigand that the development of the Circle's distinctive views happened ten years earlier than Weigand maintained, and that Wolters's medievalism — expressed in his *Herrschaft und Dienst* (1909) which was published in the Circle's original house journal *Blätter für die Kunst* — was more influential in that crystallization than Plato.[11]

Weigand had further sought to identify two distinctive phases in the Circle's reception of Plato, the first a romantic and erotic one, of which Friedemann's 1914 book was the apotheosis, the second a more logical one focused on the "neue Wissenschaft," concluded and epitomized by Hildebrandt's book of 1933. (At another point, he distinguished more succinctly between three aspects of Plato's reception in the Circle: the erotic Plato, the logical Plato, and the political Plato.)[12] The present discussion will broadly sustain Weigand's fundamental contention at the end of the symposium discussion of his article, that Plato had a "Hilfsfunktion" for the development of the Circle, and that without Plato, the Circle would not have become what it did.[13] But it will challenge his identification of the various phases and key texts in that role, focusing instead on the years between 1909 and 1914, a period when, as both Thomas Karlauf and Robert Norton agree (despite their many differences), important shifts in the self-identification of the Circle took place.[14] In this process, Plato was far from the only source, but he was an important one, at least for the articles published by Kurt Hildebrandt in each of the three volumes of the Circle's second house journal, the *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung*, appearing in 1910, 1911, and 1912, and their relationship to the broader *Jahrbuch* project itself. For Norton, the *Jahrbuch* is pivotal to the distinctive politicization of the Circle; for me, it is also pivotal to its Platonization, taking into account Karlauf's general remark on Plato in the Circle: "Die 'Georgisierung Platons' ging Hand in Hand mit der 'Platonisierung Georges.'"[15] Nevertheless, I also show that there is evidence of interest in Plato among key figures in the Circle stretching back much farther, at least to 1901, and suggest that the bursting of Plato into published prominence in the Circle's concerns in 1910 must have been preceded by significant thinking and reading prior to that.[16] I then argue, contra Norton and Weigand, that even before Hildebrandt's *Symposium* translation, "Hellas und Wilamowitz" is an important announcement in light of the themes of Plato as the "Führer," lawgiver, lover, and poet that would exercise so powerful an influence in the later thinking of the Circle and in remarks by George himself.[17] And contra Gadamer, I argue that these themes appear

not significantly later than the formation of the Circle's political views in Wolters's *Herrschaft und Dienst* of 1909 (a work that Norton, like Gadamer, sees as pivotal), or for that matter Gundolf's "Gefolgschaft und Jüngertum" of the same year.[18] Rather than singling out any one of these works, it is more fruitful to see 1909 through 1911 as an important crucible for the Circle's collective identity, and to see the medievalism of Wolters, Gundolf's poetic model of individual subservience to the master, Hildebrandt's invocation of Plato, and the *Jahrbuch* enterprise itself as jointly formative in that development.

Among recent and useful grapplings with Plato and the Circle is an article in the *George-Jahrbuch* in 2008/09, authored by Stefan Rebenich.[19] Rebenich points out that George would have read Plato at the Darmstädter Gymnasium, in particular the *Apology*, *Crito*, and most of the *Phaedo*, focusing on the figure of Socrates (*R*, 118). He usefully surveys the work of Friedemann, in particular, and the role of the Platonic Academy as a model for the Circle, going on to discuss Singer, Salin, and Hildebrandt more briefly. Rebenich focuses on two themes in what he rightly acknowledges to be a heterogeneous landscape: the role of *eros*, and the political Plato in enabling "die esoterische Gemeinschaft zu transzendieren und das Konzept eines neuen 'Staates' oder 'Reiches' zu entwickeln" (*R*, 127), resulting in "Platon . . . der Führer zur Tat" in Hildebrandt's account of 1933 (*R*, 128).[20] And he gives an interesting reading of the resonance of George Circle themes about Plato in the work of Jaeger, Friedländer, and Reinhardt, complementing Orozco's account of the resonance with avowed Nazi theorists and fellow travelers (and her focus on comparing Hildebrandt and Jaeger).

Nevertheless, the most important flaw in Rebenich's piece is that his reading of the relation between Nietzsche and Plato is tin-eared, expressed in his claim that "Nietzsche hatte ein negatives Platonbild," such that it was necessary to emancipate oneself from Nietzsche in order to formulate a positive account of Plato (*R*, 120–21). As I argue in this essay, this misunderstands the roots of Nietzsche's own political reading of Plato — a reading to which Kurt Hildebrandt especially, like Stefan George himself, was very much alive, as Ulrich Raulff has pointed out.[21] Nietzsche's positive understanding of Platonic politics was expressed especially in the early lectures in Basel. In the notes constituting his "Einleitung in das Studium der platonischen Dialoge," for example, Nietzsche proclaimed that "als Mittelpunkt des platonischen Wollens ist seine legislatorische Mission zu begreifen," and called attention to his "fertiges politisches Ziel" at the age of forty-one or forty-two, when he founded the Academy because "es fehlt nur an Menschen, die er zu Philosophen macht, damit sie einmal mit ihm den neuen Staat gründen."[22] The importance of Plato's political vision is also evident in the essay "The Greek State" (apparently known to George, as we shall see), and in scattered remarks throughout the corpus, as in

Morgenröte (1881), where Nietzsche insisted of Plato: "*Möglich* waren seine Gedanken so gewiß die des Mohammed möglich waren: sind doch viel unglaublichere die des Christentums, als möglich bewiesen worden! Ein paar Zufälle weniger und ein paar andere Zufälle mehr — und die Welt hätte die Platonisierung des europäischen Südens erlebt."[23] This essay argues that the George Circle's ear for Nietzsche and Plato was far more subtle — and its conception of the links between them far more significant — than Rebenich allows.

Beginnings

While Karlauf asserts that "der erste Hinweis auf Platon [for George] findet sich im Februar 1910," it is striking that George at least received correspondence about Plato from a member of the Circle as early as 1901.[24] Gundolf wrote to George on 8 June 1901, praising a lecture that he had heard (at the University of Berlin) by — of all people, in light of later developments — Wilamowitz.[25] (Gundolf would later famously deride Wilamowitz's work as "Platon für Dienstmädchen.")[26] Hearing the lecture had for Gundolf clarified the foundation of Plato's attraction; Plato is a flame that still burns with an inner blaze despite bearing the impurities of slag and ashes of the old *Deutschbürgerlichkeit*, which will be burned away. George, however, did not mention Plato in his reply to the letter, and Gundolf, perhaps taking the hint, reserved his subsequent enthusiasm for Plato for other correspondents.[27] A few days after the letter to the Master, he wrote to Karl Wolfskehl on 13 June, attacking the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin on Plato's *Lysis*.[28] A month later, in the middle of July, he wrote to Roderick Hugh that he was planning to work through Plato's *Republic*, praising the eternal versatile freshness of Plato.[29] And a week after that, he reported his triumph in this self-appointed task to Wolfskehl again:

> Gelesen: Platos *Staat*: Mir ist wertvoller daran die Art, der Akt des Denkens als die Gedanken: Welch eine Technik der Überleitung, als ob er das Gras wachsen hörte. Wie weiss er dem Hörer . . . das Gefühl der Empfängnis zu regen, dass er meint, das Blut des Gedankenleibes perlen zu hören, und dass er fast fühlt, wie dieser Leib in uns wächst und sich streckt und befiedert wird . . ., ein Mythus geworden unveränderlich und ewig.

Gundolf went on to remark how few philosophers are like Plato. Most are dogmatic; none knows like Plato how to procreate and help to be born (an implicit reference to the figure of Socrates as the midwife in Plato's *Theaetetus*). He concluded that Plato was still pure and free.[30]

Between 1901 and 1910 there appears to be little mention of Plato in Circle correspondence;[31] Gundolf's early enthusiasm seems to have cooled

for a while.[32] But Jan Steinhaußen has argued that even in this period of relative torpor for the working of Plato in and upon the Circle, the role of Socrates is not to be overlooked. The brief passion for Maximilian Kronberger, and his early death, led George to compare his love for the boy to the love of Plato for Socrates and Dante for Beatrice.[33] The Socratic aspect of the Circle in this period has been widely observed, though strikingly, as noted, George's comparison of himself at this stage was with the youthful Plato loving "Maximin" as Socrates, despite Maximilian's extreme youth. Weigand has argued that the death of "Maximin" led George to transform himself into a more properly Socratic figure, from "der durch Maximin Erweckte" to "der sokratische Erwecker."[34] This Socratic interest preceded and seems to have been distinct from the principal cultivation of Plato as a Circle model, and indeed Hildebrandt testified that George explained to him that he had earlier (before reading Kassner's *Phaedrus* translation) had "kein Verhältnis zu Platon."[35] George himself would later speak much less about Socrates than about Plato; he would, for example, persuade Ernst Bertram to change the subtitle of his *Nietzsche* from "Die Musik des Sokrates" to "Versuch einer Mythologie."[36] But for many of the Circle members, and in particular Hildebrandt, it was an interest in both Plato and Socrates that would become distinctive, compared to other contemporaneous readings tending to contrast the Athenian student with his teacher.

The Crux: 1909–12

The year 1910 was, as Karlauf remarks, the second "Durchbruch" in George's life, and one of the most important in the history of the Circle. Among the events of that year — others including the discovery of Hölderlin's *Nachlass*, the publication of the first fifteen poems of the *Stern des Bundes* and of the first *Jahrbuch*, and the meeting with Max Weber — was the "Entdeckung Platons" (*K*, 448). We see George himself bringing up the topic of Plato on 12 February 1910, when according to Herbert Steiner, he discussed several books with friends, including Plato's *Phaedrus* in Rudolf Kassner's translation, reading aloud to Steiner that month from Socrates's speech on *eros*. Kassner's translation was one of the few books allowed in the "Globe" reception room reserved for George in the Wolfskehls' Munich apartment.[37] The translation was republished by Eugen Diederichs in Jena in 1910, though it had originally appeared in 1904 (apparently Kafka owned a copy from the first printing), and so it is unclear whether it came to George's attention only in 1910, or whether the republication simply prodded his memory.[38] At any rate, by June of 1910, George had formulated a view of Plato sufficiently strong to allow for criticism of Nietzsche's attack of Plato (that is, of Plato's metaphysics;

as we saw earlier, at least in some moments, Nietzsche was very much alive to Plato's political vision): "In Nietzsche steht doch ziemlich alles. Er hat die wesentlichen grossen dinge verstanden: nur hatte er den PLASTISCHEN GOTT [*sic*] nicht (daher sein missverstehen der Griechen besonders Platons)." Thus, George managed to praise Nietzsche while criticizing his blind spot in relation to Plato, and indeed — note the mention of "Gott" — to the divine.[39]

The year 1910, of course, predates Hildebrandt's *Symposium* translation, and Hildebrandt himself recalled that it was Kassner's *Symposium* translation (though he must have meant the *Phaedrus*) which had awakened George's interest in Plato and led him to read the dialogues in Greek with Ernst Gundolf over the next year.[40] But already from the autumn of 1909, George's attention must have been turned to Plato at least insofar as he figures (rather largely) in Hildebrandt's "Hellas" essay, a manuscript that was sent by the author to the poet in that autumn. As has been established, George first wanted Georg Bondi to publish the essay as a separate pamphlet, but when the publisher refused, he conceived the *Jahrbuch* project as a publication of the *Blätter* to be printed by Otto von Holten, announcing its founding to a group of his closest associates on 3 November 1909.[41] Edgar Salin called the *Jahrbücher* "Kampfschriften."[42] The first volume appeared in early March 1910, composed of six essays. While it is arguable that the essays by Wolfskehl, Gundolf, and Wolters were most central to the shaping of the notion of the "movement" (with Wolfskehl formulating there for the first time a Georgean version of the idea of the Secret Germany), one should not neglect the extent to which the essay by Hildebrandt — particularly in its reading of Plato — also contributed significantly to this end.[43]

Beginning with tragedy, and condemning Wilamowitz as an "optimist" through and through,[44] it is the theme of *eros* (also the concluding line and theme of the essay) that brings Hildebrandt from Wilamowitz's reading and translation of Greek tragedy to that of Plato. He cites Wilamowitz calling Plato moralistic-supernatural, to which he gives a one-line riposte: "Kennt er denn nicht die gestalt und rede der Diotima?"[45] Presaging his own later translation, it is the *Symposium* and its reading of *eros* that lies at the heart of Hildebrandt's own conception of Plato's works here. Even more important is his contrast between Wilamowitz's seeing Plato as a man of science and his inability to see him as a priest, poet, or even educator — facets that remain alien to the classical scholar.[46] Here, Hildebrandt invokes the *Phaedrus*, the same dialogue that Kassner had translated (and that Hildebrandt himself would plan to translate in the summer of 1933). He argued that the *mania* (madness) of the *Phaedrus* shows contempt for enlightenment and even for writing itself (this is a reference to Socrates's praise in the dialogue for oral communication and the reservations he expresses about the written word, topics that Derrida

would eventually make his own).[47] Far from celebrating a merely erotic Plato, with the discovery of the logical Plato to come later, Hildebrandt is here already announcing the battle against "moderne wissenschaft," which Norton locates primarily in Wolters's essay in the same volume.[48] (George would later make a sort of rapprochement with *Wissenschaft*, especially under Gundolf's influence, but after their break in 1926, he reverted to his original suspicion of it.[49]) It is a battle that Hildebrandt defines as taking place between *Wissenschaft* and *Kunst* (though we will see that such hostility to *Wissenschaft* would come back to haunt Hildebrandt later):

> Plato fehlt ganz die wahllosigkeit moderner wissenschaft, nur das schöne will er schauen und zeugen . . . Niemand der die luft eines Platonischen dialogs geatmet hat, wird im wesen des Plato die kunst für ein zufälliges halten. Mit blossem wissen ist ihm nicht beizukommen, wenn nicht die seele über jahrtausende hinweg zur seele spricht.[50]

And he goes on to contrast Aristotle as "Vater der Wissenschaft" with Plato, whose

> reich war grösser, und grenzenlos. Die welt will er schauen, aber mehr, sie bilden nach seinem bilde. Liebe zum schönen und der trieb das schöne zu schaffen, fliessen ihm im Eros zusammen. Dem priester und dichter, könig im reich der seelen und schöpfer einer welt, was wäre ihm das zufällige wissen gewesen!

Hildebrandt finally announces here a direct line from Plato to Goethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and George. All four of the moderns are "wie Plato gegner des tatenlosen, zerfliessenden, unbegrenzten in der romantik und führen doch die ganze seelische und geistige kraft der romantik fort."[51]

In the 1911 *Jahrbuch* essay "Romantisch und Dionysisch," the first of two parts (the second of which would appear in the final *Jahrbuch* in 1912), Hildebrandt made a further important move that would distinguish the Circle's readings of Plato from those of Nietzsche (at least, from those commonly associated with Nietzsche) and of other readers of Plato at the time.[52] This was to identify not only Plato, but Socrates, as the living *Gestalt* to be emulated.[53] Socrates, Hildebrandt announced, was much more than a philosopher:

> Nicht als denker, sondern als lebendige gestalt war er begründer des geistigen reiches und die unterhaltungen auf der strasse, sein scherz beim werben um jünglinge, seine peinliche erfüllung der gesetzlichen pflichten, seine gebärde auf der rednerbühne, alles waren zugleich handlungen seines geistigen reiches. Und wenn wir ihn, der die heroische gebärde verschmähte, in prozess und tod kaum minder gross sehen als Christus, so wird uns bildhaft klar, dass denken und tun ihm eins war und sein wille nicht geringer als seine erkenntnis.[54]

That focus on Socrates would remain characteristic of Hildebrandt to the end: in his *Erinnerungen* he insisted on Socrates (and in particular, the Platonic Socrates) as the "Führer" and as a model recreated in George's own experience.[55] Steinhaußen has observed that several other members of the Circle also appealed to the parallel between George and Socrates: Robert Boehringer in his memoirs of George, for example, remarked that George pursued worthy youths and directed them toward the correct way of life, as had Socrates, and Edgar Salin, in his own memoirs, remarked on George's homoerotic fascination, comparing it to Socrates's interest in Alcibiades. Hans Brasch, though not a member of the inner Circle, associated its bodily-erotic roots with Socrates and Plato.[56]

Just as we have seen George defend Plato against Nietzsche's misreading of him, so other figures in the Circle mounted a similar defense against Nietzsche's critique of Socrates. Ernst Bertram's book *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie* (1918) explained Nietzsche's negative portrait of both Socrates and Plato as arising from his own homosexual self-hatred.[57] Socrates was more generally, of course, a figure of interest to those with homoerotic inclinations in Germany — as in England — at the time. "Socrates," in fact, was a code word among German homosexuals, and the figure of Socrates as lover in the *Symposium* and *Phaedo* would be invoked, among others, by the son of Thomas Mann, Klaus Mann, who grew up in these circles.[58]

Not all the members of the Circle were happy with its homoerotic dimension. George's early friend and patron Sabine Lepsius famously challenged its celebration, and the contrasting neglect of the *Frauenfrage*, in the 1910 *Jahrbuch*, arguing that the love of Plato, Dante, and Shakespeare was not a distinctively homoerotic love but rather a love independent of sex.[59] Lepsius denounced the Circle's veneration of Athens as a perversion.[60] Despite the fact that her criticism appealed to the impeccable theme (for the Circle) of the *Gestalt* of the whole person uniting *Geist*, *Seele*, and *Leib,* Gundolf spoke for the Circle in rejecting Lepsius's criticism and in defending the *Jahrbuch* by invoking Plato's Aspasia and Diotima — but, interestingly, not mentioning Socrates: perhaps the latter's *Knabenliebe* was too well known.[61] Not all of George's female associates were offended by his homoeroticism and that of the Circle, however. Edith Landmann, for her part, ascribed the model of the lover to Plato rather than to Socrates: "Platon ist George verwandt als Meister unter Jüngern, als Liebender und als Gründer."[62]

Returning to Hildebrandt's 1911 portrait of Socrates, we find that his mention of the *Gestalt* of Socrates is significant. It links Hildebrandt's essay to the essay published by Wolters in the same 1911 volume of the *Jahrbuch*, entitled simply "Gestalt." Wolters's ringing conclusion announces *Gestalt* as a redemptive force:

> der bedingte zwang, die lebendige fuge, das schöne sein aller kräfte ist uns not und heil und wir suchen in uns selber für das ganze in dem wir ruhen und handeln, leben und sind, die erfüllung des Gesetzes, die begnadung durch das Wunder des schönen nach dem denkbaren bilde des All-Einen im sichtbaren spiegel unseres geistigen Herrschers.[63]

As Weigand observed, George "sucht Transzendenz nur in der Immanenz."[64] *Gestalt* became a central concept for the Circle as part of George's desire to go beyond Bergson (by whom Gundolf was temporarily fascinated) on the unity of the soul and the body, and to celebrate the body itself as the opposite of mysticism and as the great historical discovery of the Greeks. Thus, Gundolf's *Goethe* of 1916, in its eleventh edition by 1922, celebrated the *Gestalt* of Napoleon, Frederick the Great, and other such figures, while Wolters attacked Bergson's alternative concept of "Entwicklung" in his *Jahrbuch* article, and George made *Gestalt* the subtitle of the second book of *Der siebente Ring* (1907). Wolters then wrote a book offering a new organon of *Wissenschaft*, and George in his introduction to it spoke of the *Gestalt* of the Greeks.[65]

For his part in 1911, Hildebrandt acknowledged that later dangerous intellectual currents — as diverse as the celebration of abstract *Wissenschaft*, mystical Neoplatonism, ascetic-moralistic tendencies of Christianity, and romantic idealism — all arose out of a (mis)reading of Plato. But his reading was different: "sehen wir bei Plato vieles christlich, was heidnisch, vieles jenseitig, was ganz irdisch ist." Plato's effort was "immer wieder zur erde [zurückzukehren], um seine gesichte in körperliche wirklichkeit zu formen." And most importantly, his Academy had a spiritual-political purpose: "In der Akademie schuf er sich den lebendigen geistigen staat." This may be the first mention of the Academy as a model by a member of the Circle, and it is one that George himself would adopt. And already in the 1910 *Jahrbuch*, Hildebrandt had for his part shown that in his understanding of Plato, the idea of the Academy as a new *Staat* was not merely a metaphor. He identified Sparta as Plato's highest model and stressed that in the *Laws*, Plato announced himself not as benignly or laxly more permissive than in the *Republic* (as Wilamowitz — and a number of scholars since him — had argued), but rather as a lawgiver: "Gesetze geben heisst Plato: festsetzen, was geschehen soll, aber nicht untersuchen, was im wesen gut oder schön ist."[66]

Thus, already by early 1911, Hildebrandt had fashioned Plato as priest, poet, educator, avatar of love — and of action — against *Wissenschaft*, as founder of an Academy that modeled a "living spiritual state," and as lawgiver. The image of a master combining these roles, whether or not explicitly ascribed to Plato, would become paradigmatic of George himself. For example, Gundolf's sixtieth-birthday celebration speech about George, given in Heidelberg on 12 July 1928, described him as "Künstler, Priester,

Profet und Herrscher," comparing him to David and Moses, Pythagoras and Plato, Gregory the Great and Dante as "Sinnbilder einer solchen Einheit."[67] No other figure in the George pantheon — neither Dante, Goethe, or Nietzsche, whom Norton lists with Plato as George's mature idols, nor Napoleon, Frederick II, or Frederick the Great — combined all of these attributes and roles in one.[68] For this reason, if for no other, Plato became important to the Circle, and Socrates (despite his failure to give laws or found an academy) scarcely less so.

We have evidence of George himself responding to this theme. In late January of 1911, George spent two evenings discussing Plato with Vallentin, Wolfskehl, and Hildebrandt. In the course of a third evening's conversation about Napoleon, Hildebrandt recalls that George's wish word for the group was a Platonic Academy.[69] While this recollection could be self-serving on Hildebrandt's part, inflating Plato's importance for George in order to aggrandize his own role as one of the two leading Plato scholars in the Circle, there is further independent testimony of George's active and reflective interest in Plato. The scholar of Romance languages and literature Ernst Robert Curtius recalled visiting George on 16 April 1911 and being told: "Manche meinen in meinen ersten Büchern sei nur Künstlerisches enthalten, nicht der Wille zum neuen Menschlichen. Ganz falsch! *Algabal* ist ein revolutionäres Buch. Hören sie diesen Satz von Plato: Die musischen Ordnungen ändern sich nur mit den staatlichen."[70] Likewise, Edith Landmann remembered that when a young friend asked George how his teaching of the unity of body and soul could be reconciled with Plato's teaching of the immortality of the soul (for example, in the *Phaedo*), George replied with a disquisition on the historical development of the *polis* and Plato's place within it. George would much later assure Hildebrandt that Hildebrandt's 1930s Plato book manuscript was solid enough to withstand even the inauthenticity of Plato's Seventh Letter, should the latter be proven, showing again George's alertness to general debates on Plato both inside and outside the Circle.[71]

George paid extensive attention to Hildebrandt's *Symposium* translation, hearing it read in draft in October 1911 (the occasion when George explained that his interest in Plato had been awakened by Kassner's *Phaedrus* translation).[72] The Circle received it equally warmly as a powerful polemic on their behalf — Ernst Bertram writing to Hildebrandt that he believed the book would win "die richtigen Feinde" as well as "die besten Freunde."[73] As to its major themes, Hildebrandt recalled that the justification of *Knabenliebe* was so clearly expressed in the text and translation "dass selbst George verwundert war, dass ein Verleger dies druckte."[74] And George immediately put the text to practical, if only political in miniature, use. In May of 1912, he shaped the *Symposium* into a warning to Gundolf against being captured by his love affair with Fine Sobotka [von Kahler] (and so, as George feared, lost to their higher philosophical

friendship): the *Symposium*'s concept of love ascending from the love of a beautiful thing toward the higher and more beautiful is turned by George into a reflection that subtly distances and alienates Gundolf from a single chosen woman. George invokes the hundreds of people who might be worthy of being marshaled and loved by Gundolf and by the members of their group more broadly, but who are perhaps sadly alienated from one another in their high emotions.[75] These themes emerge in the "Leib und Seele" poem of *Der siebente Ring*, which treats *eros* in terms and images echoing the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, as both Edith Landmann and Kurt Hildebrandt later pointed out.[76]

Friedemann and Beyond

Thus when we turn to the next major phase in the Circle's Platonic engagement, which was dominated by Heinrich Friedemann's book *Platon: Seine Gestalt*, we find that many of its themes had already been established.[77] Having written his dissertation with Paul Natorp in Marburg in 1911, Friedemann approached Gundolf on 6 September 1913 with the proposal to habilitate in Heidelberg (where Gundolf had recently been appointed to teach) with his work on Plato.[78] The proposal being accepted, Friedemann wrote to Gundolf on the last day of 1913, seeking permission to dedicate the book to him: the dedication eventually appeared as "Friedrich Gundolf dem Führer und Freunde."[79] On 24 May 1914, Wolters was hoping to read the manuscript, with Hildebrandt as a possible contribution to an intended fourth volume of the *Jahrbuch*.[80] But — perhaps as a result of the "problem" mentioned by Wolters to Gundolf on 10 November 1914[81] — it in fact appeared as a separate book, "the only work of prose ever to be published separately by Georg Bondi with the smoking urn signet of the *Blätter für die Kunst*."[82] George had sent corrections to the proofs on 18 November, exclaiming to friends that he had read the proofs in two nights with greater excitement than a Sherlock Holmes novel.[83]

It is often forgotten that Friedemann treated Socrates with almost as much admiration and respect as he did Plato. The "plasticity" which George had found in Plato's conception of God, Friedemann found also in Socrates ("noch plastisch," *F*, 14), and Socrates himself served as "der gründer . . . zum herrscher aber erhöht erst sein tod den kündenden jünger und weiht ihn zum gründer des kultes" (*F*, 112). The demand that Socrates and Plato shared was "nicht kenntnis mehren sondern das leben verwandeln" (*F*, 139). Not dry knowledge but living self- and polis-formation was the essence of Platonic teaching.

Friedemann's book made a certain splash, as Edith Landmann reported to George at the end of December, but its epochal effect on

George was almost certainly deepened by Friedemann's death in battle on 22 February 1915. George celebrated and defended the book's importance ever after, commenting, for example, on a critical letter about it by Werner Jaeger thus:

> Woher soll Platon denn erkannt werden, wenn nicht von einer bestimmten Realität und Gegenwart aus? Wenn man, wie Jaeger meint, lieber garnichts [*sic*] vom Wesen der Dinge sagen soll, so ist die Antike ein vermauerter Tempel . . . Eine Geburt gibt es nur aus Zweien.[84]

From this point onward, Plato was a key figure in a number of important statements and engagements of George himself. In March 1916, shocked by the war, George declared himself to the new disciple Ernst Glöckner to have decided to work no longer merely as an educator, but as a man of action who wanted "alles aus Deutschland machen." Comparing his own task to that of his habitual heroes, George observed that while Plato and Dante had had an easier task than his own in some respects, theirs was also more difficult in that they, like Socrates, were bound to their respective societies, while Shakespeare had had nothing to do with the society of his own day.[85]

In the context of this pronouncement and its addressee, it is useful to note differences among the various members of the Circle in their knowledge of Plato. Glöckner, who had met George in the spring of 1913 and had been inducted with some reluctance into the ranks of his intimates, immediately began reading Plato with enthusiasm that April, and heard George speak about Friedemann on 30 May 1915.[86] Yet George did not give him Friedemann's book until 22 March 1917, and three days later, he recorded that he was "slowly" reading it.[87] George's own enthusiasm for Friedemann's interpretation did not spread like wildfire among all levels of the Circle, even where Plato himself was of some interest.

The next indication of the seriousness with which George took the model of a Platonic politics comes from a visit in April 1919 from Edgar Salin, whose own book on Plato would be published in 1921.[88] George held forth to Salin on "das Weiterfunktionieren der Staatsmaschine nach dem Zusammenbruch":

> Sie kennen ihren Platon, und es wird Sie nicht überraschen, wenn die gleiche Spezies nach Monarchie und Demokratie auch noch der grausamsten Tyrannis huldigt . . . Jede Staatsform ist so viel oder so wenig wert wie die Menschen, die sie tragen. Von mir aus mag es Demokratie auf allen Gebieten geben, nur im geistigen Bereich hat sie nichts zu suchen.[89]

Again, as with Curtius, one sees George drawing on Plato in the specific context of political ambitions and discussions. That June, Gundolf read

Salin's new Plato book aloud to the approval of the "Convent der Freunde" gathered for the Whitsun holiday.[90] A year later, in a "grosse Diskussion," George insisted that Plato's version of the Transcendental was a true expression of the Greek world that it closed: the Transcendental had previously belonged to "actuality," and Plato discovered it and constructed it anew in the earthly world. Again, we see George rejecting the reading of Plato as otherworldly, in the way that Nietzsche had read Plato in some prominent passages. George insisted rather that through Christianity, Plato had actually saved rather than destroyed the Greek model.[91]

In the 1920s, the Plato interest of the Master and the Circle is less well documented — though we see Gundolf, for example, fending off translations that fail to take account of the Circle's views,[92] and Georg Simmel publishing on Platonic love in 1923[93] — until 1926–27, when Kurt Singer sent to George first the manuscript and then the published book of his *Platon der Gründer*.[94] On 30 May 1927, Kantorowicz wrote to Singer from Heidelberg about George's intense interest in the book.[95] Meanwhile, having been advised by George to write his habilitation on Plato, rather than on the problematic theme of "Nature and Spirit," Hildebrandt sent the following year a manuscript of *Das neue Platon-Bild* to Wolters, who agreed with George that its polemic against Jaeger was very fitting.[96] And in 1928, three lectures of Hildebrandt's were published under the title *Staat und Rasse*, summing up the eugenicist reading that Hildebrandt had welded to the *Führer/Gründer/Dichter* theme in his interpretation of Plato.

Hildebrandt Redux: Plato, Nietzsche, and the Nazis, with Caveats

Whereas his *Symposium* translation had focused on beauty, creative art, and its political significance, Hildebrandt — trained and qualified as a medical doctor — subsequently began to cultivate a serious interest in genetics and eugenics, and to integrate these topics into his account of Plato. Writing to George in 1917, he shows himself concerned to distinguish his growing interest in genetics and eugenics from the sort of *Naturwissenschaft* that George would decry. His strategy is to ally Mendelian genetics with a mathematical and pure eugenics as opposed to a mere "empirische findung." This remark in a letter to George on 15 May 1917 was followed by the disclaimer: "Ich rede also im grunde nicht von natur*wissenschaft* sondern vom Urphänomen selbst."[97] This correspondence was part of his preparation of the two 1920 books mentioned above, in which racial and national degeneration became central to the account of what both Plato and contemporary Germany had to struggle against.

At the same time — in the process of finishing his dissertation and then failing to finish his habilitation — Hildebrandt managed to forge a

more explicit consonance between Nietzsche and Plato than perhaps anyone else in the Circle had done. Hildebrandt's Marburg dissertation, *Nietzsches Wettkampf mit Sokrates und Plato* (1922) — written, notably, under Natorp and dedicated on publication to Ernst Gundolf — argued that all three figures should be seen as founders and leaders who created myths in the quest to constitute a new society, and it criticized Ernst Bertram's *Nietzsche*. (Hildebrandt sent Gundolf a précis of the book and a letter in which he defended himself against Wolters's charge of excessive criticism of Bertram; the letter offers only lukewarm praise of Natorp as being, in contrast to Wilamowitz, "ein Mensch von hoher Cultur.")[98]

In 1931, George organized a second edition of Friedemann's book with an afterword by Hildebrandt, and soon thereafter he was inquiring about Hildebrandt's own latest Plato manuscript (destined for publication in 1933).[99] In May 1932, Ludwig Thormaehlen was reading this new manuscript, and in September 1932, Hildebrandt and Frank Mehnert visited George in Berlin, where Hildebrandt read the work to George for four hours straight one afternoon. George claimed it as "our" work and declared that it could, like Hölderlin, serve to unify the Greek world with Christianity.[100] Hildebrandt read the rest of the manuscript (with a still-unfinished conclusion) to George at the end of October or beginning of November. It was on this occasion that George commented — with a striking concern for keeping up *wissenschaftliche* appearances — that Hildebrandt's book was unassailable, irrespective of the authenticity of Plato's disputed Seventh Letter (as noted above). From January to March 1933 (as evidenced by thirteen separate documents in the George Archives),[101] George was working on the corrections to the proofs, dictating stylistic and substantive changes, and Hildebrandt recalled that, in regard to one correction, the poet remarked that he was making it with the advice that Hildebrandt maintain a neutral stance towards the Nazi party — "nichts für 'die Partei[,]' nichts gegen sie zu sagen."[102] In late February, Hildebrandt wrote to George, defending his linking of the eternal Platonic ideas to Attic daily politics, and in March, George was debating the cover image, referring to Robert Boehringer's research on busts of Plato.[103]

One particularly striking feature of this correspondence is the fact that George referred to Nietzsche's unpublished essay "The Greek State" as correcting the general failure of the nineteenth century to recognize Plato's "politische leidenschaft."[104] That George had such knowledge of Nietzsche's corpus and of a side of Nietzsche seldom recognized — his admiration, especially in his Basel lectures and in early texts such as "The Greek State" for Plato as a political actor — is a clue to the way in which the Circle managed to combine admiration for Nietzsche with a view of Plato himself as a Nietzschean founder, leader, and legislator. It shows George sharing Hildebrandt's insistence on the compatibility of Nietzsche

and Plato, another way in which the doctor was arguably more central to the articulation of a key aspect of the Circle's outlook than is sometimes understood.[105]

Hildebrandt joined the Nazi party in the spring of 1933; his book appeared under the title *Platon, der Kampf des Geistes um die Macht* with Georg Bondi in June. Emblazoned on its cover and title page was the swastika signet that had originally identified the Circle's publications. One significant aspect of the book — apart from its notorious advocacy of racism and eugenics[106] — was its insistence on placing "Platons Politik in seiner Gegenwart, statt in der zeitlosen Ewigkeit," as Hildebrandt had expressed his aim in a letter to George.[107] In May and June, he and George discussed his plan to translate the *Phaedrus*. May 1933 also brought the fraught question of George's relationship to the Prussian Academy of Poets, to which he gave his equivocal response on 10 May, the day of the public burning of books in five German cities. In late September, George made his equivocal comments to the Landmanns about the fate of the German Jewry being only a part of what Germany would live through in the next fifty years.[108] Six weeks before he was to die on 4 December 1933, he was still conversing about Plato on 28 October, again about Boehringer's book, about busts of Plato and a newly discovered Platonic head.[109]

Hildebrandt's publications in and after 1933 were explicitly identified with National Socialism; as Orozco observes, he was far from the only German classical scholar or philosopher to make that identification. Hildebrandt's distinctive "Georgean" perspective, however, was demonstrated in 1933 and repeated in 1939, in his introduction to August Horneffer's translation of the *Republic* into German, emphasizing the procession from Nietzsche to George to Hitler. "Erst Nietzsche hat mit seherischem Blick in Platon die große politische Leidenschaft anerkannt," while following him, "erst Stefan George hat der Gegenwart gezeigt, was es heißt, einen geistigen Staat zu gründen, und hat damit manchen das Auge auch für Platon geöffnet." Subsequently came the "Weltkatastrophe" (that is, the Great War) which had first taught all peoples that they could have no success without spiritual rebirth; and following that, finally, "erst die Neugründung des deutschen Staates hat die Grundlage geschaffen für eine echte deutsche Kultur, für die Verwirklichung des deutschen Volkstums."[110] That "Neugründung" was of course the one achieved at the hands of Hitler, who was praised throughout the introduction — for example, in the first paragraph:

> In Wahrheit aber gibt es nicht viele Bücher, die in den Jahren des Aufbruches, wenn die zur Macht gelangten Führer den höchsten Maßstab für die geistige Entfaltung und Durchgliederung des Volkes suchen, so entscheidend und fruchtbar werden können wie Platons Werke. (*H*, vii)

Strikingly, in both 1933 and 1939, in contending with Plato's avowed hatred of tyranny in the dialogue, Hildebrandt's strategy was not to deny that Hitler was a tyrant, but rather to deny that Plato had actually hated tyranny. Plato himself, he claimed, had wanted to be the "gesetzliche Diktator" of the Greek nation, but when this proved impossible, "wollte er einen dazu fähigen Tyrannen mit seinem Geiste füllen" (*H*, ix).[111] It is hard not to read the implication as being that, according to Hildebrandt, Stefan George should have been (or even wanted to be?) the dictator himself. Hildebrandt's introduction later states that "wenn Platon sein Reich durch Dichtung gründen will" (*H*, xxxv), but had instead handed over the role to the "tyrant" (not treated by Hildebrandt as a pejorative term) — namely, Hitler. Elsewhere in the introduction, Hildebrandt treats Alexander the Great as the inheritor of Plato's spirit through his student Aristotle (*H*, viii). Beyond these explicit links between Plato, Nietzsche, and Alexander, and the themes of racism and eugenics already heralded in Hildebrandt's other publications in the wake of the First World War, many of the topics resonating in the introduction were classic George Circle ones: the appeal to the youth rather than to the learned (*H*, xv); poetry and myth (as cited above, and *H*, xxxiv); the political purpose of the dialogues ("seine Dialoge waren Mittel des Handelns, des politischen Handelns," *H*, xvii); the role of the Academy as itself the "geistiger Staat" that Plato hoped would "sich im politischen erfüll[en]" (*H*, xxxiv).

Hildebrandt's enthusiastic political and intellectual engagement with Nazism continued in a series of speeches. However, while his explicit partisanship and his racial eugenicism remained intact, these speeches show him grappling with a number of tensions in his stance as a Nazi intellectual. For example, already in a speech in 1933, he was careful to attack "Individualismus," but to attempt to defend a place for "Individualität."[112] We see him here taking a more explicitly individualist tack on the question of the "Keimzelle des Staates": whereas, as noted above, Blüher had declared this to be the *Männerbund*, Hildebrandt proclaims the hero to be the "Schöpfer und Keimzelle des Staates," and then identifies this hero with the "Dichter" — again, perhaps an indication that George, not Hitler, was the true hero of the German nation.[113] And in 1934, a speech on "Deutsche Wissenschaft" explicitly engaged with the tension between the "ewigen Wahrheit, dem Ideal der Wissenschaft" and "dem Leben selbst."[114] Despite the fact that in his prewar writings Hildebrandt had been happy to attack and mock *Wissenschaft*, at least the contemporary *wissenschaftlich* approach to Plato, here he avows himself troubled by this tension, which he raises also as a tension between the necessarily *völkisch* character of *Wissenschaft* ("Das Volk sei die ewige Wahrheit" and *Wissenschaft* must serve its interests) and the ideal of eternal truth.[115] He confesses candidly, "ich glaube, jeder von uns hat diese Spannung in sich erlebt und wird sie weiter erleben," and concludes: "Die Spannung ist

ewig."[116] In an undated pamphlet entitled "Verfall des Staates und physische Entartung," he is even more tart about the need to recognize the value of *Wissenschaft*: "Auch die objektive Wissenschaft gründet in einem Werte: die Forschung muss anerkennen, dass Wahrheit besser ist als Irrtum."[117]

Conclusion

Rather than contrasting Plato's influence on the Circle with that of Nietzsche, or the Middle Ages, or Goethe, or Dante, it is more fruitful to identify the common themes — the creative power of love, of mastery and discipleship, of passionate and hierarchical community as a political project — which George and his Circle discerned in all of them. Nevertheless, within these common threads, Plato did play a special role, as the only great figure of the past to have been simultaneously politician, poet, philosopher, teacher, lover (of male youth, in particular), and artist. Curiously, as we have seen, though George cast himself as a Socratic lover and mentor especially following the Maximin affair, and though a number of the Circle members (especially Hildebrandt) were distinctively celebratory of Socrates as well as Plato, George's later remarks about Plato were notably lacking in mention of Socrates. As to Plato, however, as Nietzsche himself had in some moods averred, the Athenian could be read as embodying the same sort of political project as he himself, and as the George Circle, would eventually adopt. This was a politics of education, legislation, love, self-cultivation, and self-abnegation before a leader.

In conventional terms, this politics was ambiguous, as shown by the diverse choices and fates of George's followers under Nazism, but it unquestionably promoted attitudes that could be sympathetic to Nazism, even if some of the Circle spurned or fled it.[118] The elitist longing for a *Führer*, together with George's contempt for Weimar parliamentarianism, made it at least a natural fellow traveler of the conservative right, as Karlauf argues, but also pivotal in forging a link between traditional conservatism and Nazism, as Orozco shows.[119] What our focus on Hildebrandt adds to this story is that even so committed and explicit a party member and party intellectual expressed tensions between his admiration of Hitler and his supreme admiration of George, the poet who was the truest legislator and beside whom Hitler was at best a "tyrant." Even in a figure like Hildebrandt, who did not flinch from his allegiance to Hitler during the war, we see at work outlines of some of the considerations that others have identified in the brave about-face of Claus von Stauffenberg. The ideal Georgean vision, which even Nazism could only approximate, and which remained as a regulative conception even though many of the Circle were willing to identify it sufficiently with Nazism, was operative in making a

distinction between George and Hitler, raising the former above the latter, even for those eager to follow them both. An educational politics, legislating to shape a culture and society through the power of poetry and myth, was more fundamentally important than any particular political movement. Thus, even deeper than the valence of politics in conventional terms, lay the significance of a Platonic conception of what politics itself should be.[120]

Notes

[1] See Frank Weber, *Die Bedeutung Nietzsches für Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), 203, who claims that the Circle's Plato cult started with Friedemann's 1914 book *Platon: Seine Gestalt* and ended with Hildebrandt's book of 1933, *Platon: Der Kampf des Geistes um die Macht*, with twenty-four other books by Circle associates in between. Among the oldest studies is Franz Josef Brecht, *Platon und der George-Kreis* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1929). Some scholarship on the George Circle discusses Plato's significance dutifully, but fairly cursorily — for example: Karlhans Kluncker, "*Das geheime Deutschland*": *Über Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1985); for other recent works, see Melissa Lane, *Plato's Progeny: How Plato and Socrates Still Captivate the Modern Mind* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 152–53n43.

[2] Peter Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg: A Family History, 1905–1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), revised and translated by the author from his *Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg und seine Brüder* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1992), 33. Hoffmann quotes an adapted translation from Circle member Edgar Salin's *Von Mensch und Staat* (Basel: Schwabe, 1942). It is worth noting that whereas the Greek title of the Platonic dialogue is *Politeia*, meaning "regime" or "constitution" — a term which could in Attic usage be applied to any kind of regime (democracy, oligarchy, tyranny, etc) — English titles since the early modern period have followed the Latinate *res publica*, with its connotations of republican rule, and German titles have used *Staat*. On George and the state, but without a focus on Plato, see Wolfgang Graf Vitzthum, "Stefan George und der Staat," in *Festschrift für Martin Heckel*, ed. Karl-Hermann Kästner, Knut Wolfgang Nörr, and Klaus Schlaich (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1999), 915–39.

[3] Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg: A Family History*, 41, referencing a letter of Rudolf Fahrner to Stefan George, 10 July 1933, StGA. By this time, Fahrner had already joined the SA.

[4] Thomas Karlauf, *Stefan George: Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Karl Blessing, 2007), 405: "Zwischen 1910 und 1914 wurde Platon zu der neben Hölderlin wichtigsten Identifikationsfigur des Freundeskreises"; Karlauf rather plays down the significance of Hildebrandt as never having been part of the innermost circle of friends throughout the biography. Teresa Orozco, "Die Platon-Rezeption in Deutschland um 1933," in *"Die besten Geister der Nation": Philosophie*

und Nationalsozialismus, ed. Ilse Korotin (Vienna: Picus, 1994), 141–85. Orozco focuses mainly on Hildebrandt, comparing him to Werner Jaeger and to Nazi readings by Carl Vering, Hans Heyse, Herbert Holtorf, Ernst Krieck, Adolf Rusch, and others. However, she neither mentions Joachim Bannes's *Hitlers Kampf und Platons Staat* nor Heinrich Friedemann. See also the discussion of many of these texts as a context for Heidegger's developing reading of Plato in Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2005), 101–3.

[5] See Yannis Constantinidès, "Les législateurs de l'avenir: L'affinité des projets politiques de Plato et de Nietzsche," in *L'Herne Nietzsche*, ed. Marc Crépon (Paris: L'Herne, 2000), 199–219; and Yannis Constantinides, "Nietzsche législateur: Grandes politiques et réforme du monde," in *Lectures de Nietzsche*, ed. Jean-François Balaudé and Patrick Wotling (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2000), 208–82. Work by my doctoral student, Hugo Halferty Drochon (St John's College, University of Cambridge), has also done much to develop these links and bring them to my attention; some of his research is embodied in his article: Hugo Drochon, "'Starting with me, the earth will know great politics,"' *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 39 (forthcoming).

[6] The Circle's ideal of a *Männerbund* was product of a number of influences — both Greek and Germanic — though Circle members averred the distinctiveness of George's notion of it as a "spiritual" rather than social and institutional formation in German history. Edith Landmann, *Stefan George und die Griechen: Idee einer neuen Ethik* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1971), 94, for example, explicitly ascribed the more personal and spiritual nature of this ideal to Plato. For most of the George Circle, this was an aristocratic and elitist ideal, strongly influenced (as Karlauf has shown) by the work of Hans Blüher, whose two-volume work, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft* (Jena: Eugen Diedrichs, 1917/1919), treated the *Männerbund* as the "Keimzelle des Staates"; Blüher saw the George Circle itself as a "Musterbeispiel" of the phenomenon (Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 398–400). But see the contrasting discussion of republican democracy as resting on a citizenly *Männertreue* in the thought of Thomas Mann, in Bernd Widdig, "Mann unter Männern: Männerbünde und die Angst vor der Masse in der Rede von deutscher Republik," *The German Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (1993): 524–36; here, 526. As cited in Jan Steinhaußen, *"Aristokraten aus Not" und ihre "Philosophie der zu hoch hängenden Trauben": Nietzsche-Rezeption und literarische Produktion von Homosexuellen in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts: Thomas Mann, Stefan George, Ernst Bertram, Hugo von Hofmannsthal u.a.* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001), 311.

[7] This point, developed below especially with reference to Hildebrandt, corrects one aspect of my earlier brief discussion of the George Circle — namely, my underestimation there of their interest in Socrates: see Lane, *Plato's Progeny*, 122. On page 126, however, I do note that Joachim Bannes's *Hitlers Kampf und Platons Staat* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1933), which was influenced, if not sponsored, by the George Circle, draws on both Socrates and Plato.

[8] Kurt Weigand, "Von Nietzsche zu Platon: Wandlungen in der politischen Ethik des George-Kreises," in *Stefan George-Kolloquium*, ed. Eckhard Heftrich, Paul Gerhard Klussmann, and Hans Joachim Schrimpf (Cologne: Wienand, 1971), 67–90, with *Symposium* discussion of Weigand, 91–99.

[9] Weigand, "Von Nietzsche zu Platon," 84.

[10] *Symposium* discussion of Weigand, in Heftrich, Klussmann, and Schrimpf, *Stefan George-Kolloquium*, 94.

[11] *Symposium* discussion, 99, 97.

[12] Weigand, "Von Nietzsche zu Platon," 73, 83. That sort of two- or three-part division is echoed by Steinhaußen's discussion of homoeroticism in the Circle, noting three roles of Platonic thought in that connection: the passion for *Knabenliebe*, but giving way to a passion for spiritual beauty; Plato and Socrates as "Leitbilder" or role models; and the Platonic homoerotic model of the state. See Steinhaußen, *"Aristokraten aus Not,"* esp. 282–95.

[13] Symposium discussion of Weigand, in Heftrich, Klussmann, and Schrimpf, *Stefan George-Kolloquium*, 99.

[14] Robert E. Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and his Circle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2002), 428–42, argues that a more ambitious and focused political project for the Circle crystallized between 1909 and 1911. Thomas Karlauf agrees that, as noted below, 1910 was a pivotal year, but treats the political project of George generally as less well defined: see Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 580, on the 1930s: "Auch wenn George wusste, das er weit ins politische Feld hinein wirkte, hielt er es nicht für nötig, seine Vorstellungen zu präzisieren." Karlauf identifies an equally important transition from the seventh edition of *Blätter für die Kunst* in March 1904 onward, in which the emphasis shifted from the call for renewal of art in Germany to the call, in the later volumes, for formation of a group, and the uniqueness of George as its central star: see Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 336.

[15] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 402; Karlauf treats Plato as central at least from 1910–14 (401–5), and mentions him periodically throughout, but again confines his mention of Socrates to the section dealing with the discovery of Plato in 1910 and the importance of that through 1914. For his part, Norton occasionally observes the growing import and power of Plato for George's thinking in the course of his account — e.g., in commenting that "George began to make good on his vision of 'new hellenic days and nights' by reading and reinterpreting the ancient Greek authors, and foremost among them Plato" without any further detail (Norton, *Secret Germany*, 277), and without ever focusing on its origins and development. There are only a handful of references to Plato in his index, and only one — via Bachofen — to Socrates.

[16] This again refines my earlier brief account in *Plato's Progeny*, 122, where like Weigand I took Hildebrandt's 1912 *Symposium* as the starting point of the phenomenon.

[17] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 428–29, noting Hildebrandt's essay as prompting the launching of the *Jahrbuch*, and 437–40 on Hildebrandt's essay in the 1910 volume (see, for example, 437: "something of a disappointment overall"); Norton is like-

wise dismissive of the significance of the two-part "Romantic and Dionysian" articles that Hildebrandt published in the second and final volumes of the *Jahrbuch*.

[18] Friedrich Wolters, *Herrschaft und Dienst* (Berlin: Otto von Holten, 1909); Friedrich Gundolf, "Gefolgschaft und Jüngertum," *Blätter für die Kunst* 8 (1909): 106–12.

[19] Stefan Rebenich, "'Dass ein strahl von Hellas auf uns fiel': Platon im Georgekreis," *George-Jahrbuch* 7 (2008/09): 115–41. Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *R* and page number. A brief but useful discussion is also found in K. N. Demetriou, "A 'Legend' in Crisis: The Debate over Plato's Politics, 1930–1960," *Polis: The Journal of the Society for the Study of Greek Political Thought* 19, nos. 1–2 (2002): 61–92; here, 66–69.

[20] See Karlauf's remark about Napoleon's significance for the young George as "das Prinzip der Tat an sich": Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 37. George's heroes all embodied this signature theme.

[21] Ulrich Raulff reasserts the importance of Hildebrandt and Plato for the Circle. See *Kreis ohne Meister: Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 120–39.

[22] Nietzsche, "Einleitung in das Studium der platonischen Dialoge," lecture course, Basel, Winter 1871–72, Winter 1873–74, Summer 1876, in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, pt. 2, vol. 4, *Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen (WS 1871/72–WS 1874/75)*, ed. Fritz Bornmann and Mario Carpitella (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 211–362. See also 54, 48.

[23] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Das böse Prinzip," in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 2nd ed., vol. 3, *Morgenröthe: Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurteile*, bk. 5, aphorism 496 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 291–92.

[24] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 402. Rebenich, "Dass ein strahl," 118, notes that George would have read dialogues focusing on Socrates — in particular, the *Apology*, *Crito*, and part of the *Phaedo* — as a student at the Darmstadt Gymnasium from 1882–88.

[25] Friedrich Gundolf to Stefan George, 8 June 1901, in *Stefan George-Friedrich Gundolf: Briefwechsel*, ed. Robert Boehringer with Georg Peter Landmann (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1962), 93.

[26] "Platon für Dienstmädchen" is reported as a remark of Gundolf's by Kurt Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1965), 55n11; quoted in Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 442, and Norton, *Secret Germany*, 439, as "Plato for maids."

[27] Apart from the letter about Wilamowitz, these go unmentioned by Karlauf and Norton. Gundolf to George, 8 June 1901, in *George-Gundolf: Briefwechsel*, ed. Robert Boehringer with Georg Peter Landmann (Munich: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1962), 93.

[28] Friedrich Gundolf to Karl Wolfskehl, 13 June 1901, in *Karl und Hanna Wolfskehl: Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Gundolf 1899–1931*, ed. Karlhans Kluncker (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1977), 1:114n70.

[29] *Gundolf Briefe*: *Neue Folge*, ed. Lothar Helbing and Claus Victor Bock (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1965), 20: "Platos Staat hoffe ich jetzt durchzuarbeiten," and "die ewige bewegliche Frische des Plato."
[30] Friedrich Gundolf to Karl Wolfskehl, 20 July 1901, in *Karl und Hanna Wolfskehl: Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Gundolf*, 125–26.
[31] But see Karl Wolfskehl to Friedrich Gundolf, 20 April 1907, in *Karl und Hanna Wolfskehl: Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Gundolf*, 2:48n213, describing the choice between Plato and Heraclitus as a question of taste.
[32] Arguably, however, Gundolf's early interest in Plato scholarship foreshadows his later commitment to a certain kind of *wissenschaftlich* path, habilitating, and becoming a professor at Heidelberg. In 1911, he was already celebrating Plato's distinctive vision of *wissenschaftlich* thought. See Friedrich Gundolf to Friedrich von der Leyen, 8 July 1911, in *Gundolf Briefe*, 90: "Das wissenschaftliche denken selbst war schauen, die dialektik ein organ, keine spielerei. Das unterscheidet ja Plato von seinen modernen deutern (mystikern und rationalisten gleicher weise) . . ." Nevertheless, Gundolf's concept of *Wissenschaft* would always be heavily inflected by the Georgean perspective, as shown by his 1924 refusal to recommend a Plato translation he found unsympathetic to the Circle's understanding.
[33] Steinhaußen, *"Aristokraten aus Not,"* 285.
[34] Weigand, "Von Nietzsche zu Platon," 72.
[35] Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 79.
[36] See Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 383, though Karlauf also suggests that neither Bertram nor his book was really important to George, who misunderstood the import of the book for a start. In this paragraph, subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *K* and page number.
[37] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 425–26 for the Steiner/Kassner (no further source given); 420–27 for the Globe Room.
[38] Sometime at the end of October 1911, Hildebrandt visited George to read him his *Symposium*, and he recalled George explaining that "sein Interesse an Platon sei durch Kassners *Gastmahl*-Übertragung geweckt worden." *ZT*, 228: see Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 79–81.
[39] Stefan George to Friedrich Gundolf, 11 June 1910, in *George-Gundolf Briefwechsel*, 201–2.
[40] Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 79.
[41] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 428–29.
[42] As quoted in Norton, *Secret Germany*, 429. Compare Gundolf's pun a few years later about Friedemann's book (made before the latter was killed in the war): "Das Friedemannsche Plato-Werk . . . ist auch eine schöne kriegsgabe dieses Friedemanns und eine 'friedensgabe' dieses 'Kriegmanns'" (Friedrich Gundolf to Karl Wolfskehl, 13 November 1914, in *Karl und Hanna Wolfskehl: Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Gundolf*, 116n276). And more broadly, compare Nietzsche's use of the language of battle and war for his writings and the political project they constituted, especially in his later writings: see Constantinidès, "Les législateurs de l'avenir" and "Nietzsche législateur."

[43] For the relative neglect of the significance of Hildebrandt's contribution, see Norton, *Secret Germany*, 432–34.

[44] On pessimism in this period, see Joshua Foa Dienstag, *Pessimism: Philosophy, Ethic, Spirit* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006). The Circle was evidently rather anxious about this charge. As Norton, *Secret Germany*, 482, observes, in the third volume of the *Jahrbuch*, the editors assemble and attempt to rebut the various charges that have been made against the enterprise. They say that, contrary to public depictions of them as pessimists, it is not they who are pessimists, but rather those who believe in progress, because progress contains the seeds of its own destruction. A similar uncertainty about whether or not to side with pessimism is manifest in Hitler's *Table Talk*, in which he occasionally allied himself with optimism, while in his more considered pronouncement on philosophy instead praised pessimism; see, e.g., his discourse on the evening of 16 May 1944, *Hitler's Table Talk 1941–44*, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens, intr. Hugh Trevor-Roper, 3rd ed. (London: Phoenix, 2000), 720n327. Here it is striking that Hitler departs from the vulgar reading of Nietzsche on Kant, aligning the latter not as the last ditch of Christianity but as the first in a line of nondogmatic, nonreligious pessimism, and while admiring the Greeks, being more interested in the modern thinkers who have dissolved the old certainties, foremost among them Christianity. Hitler does not seem on the evidence of his table talk to have been himself much affected by the fetishization of Plato by the Circle and others then current.

[45] Kurt Hildebrandt, "Hellas und Wilamowitz (zum Ethos der Tragödie)," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 1 (1910): 64–117; here, 111.

[46] Hildebrandt, "Hellas und Wilamowitz": "Im grunde sieht er doch nur den wissenschaftler in ihm, fremd ist ihm der priester und dichter geblieben, fremd auch der erzieher."

[47] Hildebrandt, "Hellas und Wilamowitz": "Weiss er nicht vom Phädros [*sic*], in dem Plato die [*mania*] preist und die aufklärung und selbst das schreiben verhöhnt?"

[48] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 440: "the parting shot of the [1910] *Jahrbuch*, Wolters's essay called 'Guidelines,' takes direct aim at the institution and practice of *Wissenschaft* as a whole." Admittedly, however, Norton shows that this follows and generalizes Hildebrandt's attack on Wilamowitz (439: "The real enemy was not Wilamowitz but scholarship and science — *Wissenschaft* — itself."). In Lane, *Plato's Progeny*, 126, I noted that Alfred Rosenberg's infamous *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts: eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (Munich: Hoheneichen, 1934) praised Plato but excoriated Socrates; the present chapter reveals this contrast to be a difference between Rosenberg and many of the Georgean readings.

[49] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 523: "Je mehr ihm Gundolf entglitt, desto heftiger brachen in George die alten Vorbehalte gegen die Wissenschaft durch." Karlauf cites George's supposed remark at that time: "Von mir aus führt kein Weg zur Wissenschaft."

[50] Hildebrandt, "Hellas und Wilamowitz," 111.
[51] Hildebrandt, "Hellas und Wilamowitz," 112, 115.
[52] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 481–82, notes that preparations for the second volume began in late 1910 and the second volume appeared in April 1911, the third in November 1911 but with the print date of 1912. Norton is even more dismissive of Hildebrandt's contribution to the second and third volumes than of his contribution to the first.
[53] Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 428–29, highlights the parallels between George and Socrates that were perceived by contemporaries such as Maurice Bowra at the time.
[54] Hildebrandt, "Romantisch und Dionysisch," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 2 (1911): 89–115; here, 90.
[55] Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 91, 216. Also discussed in Steinhaußen, *"Aristokraten aus Not,"* 289.
[56] Steinhaußen, "*Aristokraten aus Not,"* 290, discussing Robert Boehringer's *Mein Bild von Stefan George* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1951), 160; Salin's *Um Stefan George*: *Erinnerung und Zeugnis* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1954), 11; on Brasch, see Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 142.
[57] Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1918). See the discussion in Steinhaußen, *"Aristokraten aus Not,"* 296–98. Bertram lived in a devoted relationship with Ernst Glöckner for years: see Norton, *Secret Germany*, 503–4.
[58] Klaus Mann, *Der Wendepunkt: Ein Lebensbericht* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1963), 133–35; also cited in Steinhaußen, "*Aristokraten aus Not,"* 301–3.
[59] Sabine Lepsius, *Stefan George: Geschichte einer Freundschaft* (Berlin: Die Runde, 1935), 49.
[60] Lepsius, *Stefan George*. Lepsius's memoir was published with an accompanying volume that contained reproductions of eleven letters sent to her by George, one letter from George to Botho Graef, and a set of photographs of George. The salutations of the letters to Lepsius grow progressively warmer, from the early "Verehrte freundin" in the first letter of 1899, to "Teure freundin" in letters of 1902–3, to "Teuerste freudin" in letters of 1904–5, and finally "Sabine Teuerste" in the undated and strikingly warm and emotional short letter catalogued last, which includes a copy of a poem by George, "An Mein Kind." See Stefan George, *Briefe, Bildnisse* (Berlin: Verlag die Runde, n.d. [1935]).
[61] Friedrich Gundolf to Sabine Lepsius, 3 August 1910, in *Gundolf Briefe*, 69; on the exchange between Lepsius and Gundolf, and the subsequent break between Lepsius and George, see Norton, *Secret Germany*, 447–56.
[62] E. Landmann, *Stefan George*, 87.
[63] Friedrich Wolters, "Gestalt," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 2 (1911): 137–58; here, 158.
[64] Weigand, "Von Nietzsche zu Platon," 75. Edith Landmann, *Stefan George*, 87, recounts the Master answering a question from a young disciple as to how his own

teaching of the unity of body and spirit related to Plato's teaching of the primacy of the soul. George's response, as reported by Landmann, stressed the inner consciousness of the soul with which Plato had healed and transcended the classical "kaloskagathos" (aristocratic) ideal: Plato had to react against the degeneration of the classical ideal and so stressed inwardness, a quality which Landmann also celebrated in George.

[65] For the preceding two sentences, see Weigand, "Von Nietzsche zu Platon," 75–76.

[66] Hildebrandt, "Romantisch und Dionysisch," 93, 93, 94, 95 for the respective quotations.

[67] *George-Gundolf: Briefwechsel*, 368.

[68] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 6. Ernst Kantorowicz noted, however, that Frederick II had for his part read Plato's *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and the Neoplatonists: this reference from Kantorowicz's *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1927) is excerpted in Georg Peter Landmann, ed., *Der George Kreis: Eine Auswahl aus seinen Schriften* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1965), 441. It is notable that Hildebrandt also wrote an introduction to Plato's *Timaios* and *Kritias*, part of which was first published in 1925 in a *Handdruck der Werkstätten Burg Giebichenstein*, but all of which was then published along with his translation as *Platon: Timaios und Kritias*, with an introduction by Kurt Hildebrandt (Leipzig: Reclam, 1942).

[69] *ZT*, 222, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 71–73. See also Weigand, "Von Nietzsche zu Platon," 71: "Der G[eorge]-K[reis] jedoch sieht in Platon den Führer zur Tat."

[70] Quoted in Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg: A Family History*, 36, citing Ernst Robert Curtius, *Kritische Essays zur europäischen Literatur* (Bern: A. Francke, 1950), 153.

[71] *ZT*, 383, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 217–19.

[72] *ZT*, 228, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 79.

[73] Ernst Bertram to Kurt Hildebrandt, 5 December 1912, Hildebrandt III, StGA, 2001, having just received the latter's translation of the *Symposium*.

[74] Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 91, quoted in Steinhaußen, *"Aristokraten aus Not,"* 287.

[75] *George-Gundolf: Briefwechsel*, 245. Mentioned in *ZT*, 234, but without any indication of this part of its contents: "Also die seele ist wieder betrübt? . . . Sie muss aber hier das platonische wort in vielfachem sinn beherzigen dass die erste stufe die liebe zu einem schönen leibe die höhere aber 'zu mehreren schönen leibern' ist. — Denk mal wieviel hunderte vielleicht heute leben die würdig wären von Dir, von uns, geleitet und geliebt zu werden — die vielleicht so nur allein zu ihrer höhe geführt werden können! Der gedanke dass da so VIELE verloren gehen können ist doch das Traurigste von allem Traurigen! Also Seele!!" The letter is also quoted in Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 512–13.

[76] E. Landmann, *Stefan George*, 87–88, 94–95; Kurt Hildebrandt, *Das Werk Stefan Georges* (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell, 1960), 91.

[77] Heinrich Friedemann, *Platon: Seine Gestalt* (Berlin: Blätter für die Kunst, 1914). Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *F* and page number.
[78] *ZT*, 241, citing the Friedrich Gundolf Archive, Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London.
[79] *ZT*, 244, citing the Gundolf Archive.
[80] *ZT*, 248, citing the Gundolf Archive.
[81] *ZT*, 254, citing the Gundolf Archive.
[82] See Norton, *Secret Germany*, 531, who translates the title of Friedemann's book as *The Figure of Plato*.
[83] The quotation is from Ernst Glöckner, *Begegnung mit Stefan George: Auszüge aus Briefen und Tagebüchern, 1913–1934*, ed. Friedrich Adam (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1972), 83: "George stellt das Buch in dieselbe Linie wie Nietzsches 'Geburt der Tragödie.' Daß er [Friedemann] einen Platonischen Menschen gesehen hätte, gäbe seinem Buch den kolossalen Wert. George sagte, bei der ersten Lektüre war er ganz hingerissen gewesen, in zwei Nächten hätte er [es] mit grösserer Spannung als einen Sherlock-Holmes-Roman gelesen." See also *ZT*, 255, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 101–3, among other sources, and Glöckner's diary of 8 March 1916, who also recalls George comparing the book to Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*.
[84] *ZT*, 259 (beginning of September 1915), citing Edith Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 22–24.
[85] Both quotations, *ZT*, 263, for 3 March 1916, citing Glöckner, *Begegnung*, no page reference.
[86] Glöckner, *Begegnung*, 37 (for 11 April 1913 reading Plato), 61 (for May).
[87] Glöckner, *Begegnung*, 93, 94.
[88] Edgar Salin, *Platon und die griechische Utopie* (Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1921).
[89] *ZT*, 294, citing Edgar Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 32–34, 306.
[90] *ZT*, 296, citing Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 43, 308, though noting that Salin himself was not present.
[91] *ZT*, 306, for 22 February 1920, citing E. Landmann, *Gespräche*, 102–4.
[92] Friedrich Gundolf to Gerhard Klamp, 17 September 1924, in *Gundolf Briefe*, 198, refusing to endorse Klamp's translation of Plato, complaining that it is too much influenced by Wilamowitz's philological approach and by post-Kantian thinking. Tellingly, Gundolf also criticizes Klamp for omitting Friedemann's book from his bibliography. *Gundolf Briefe*, 198.
[93] Georg Simmel, "Der platonische und der moderne Eros," *Österreichische Rundschau* 19, no. 6 (1923): 517–29.
[94] *ZT*, 344, for 16 March 1926, citing an interview with Georg Peter Landmann in Basel for the manuscript's being sent to George; and 349, citing Landmann's anthology no. 538 for 29 May 1927, when Singer sent George the book.
[95] *ZT*, 349, citing the Archiv Castrum Peregrini (no further reference given): "[Georges] beschränktes Interesse an dem seinerzeit übersandten Manuscript . . .

erkläre sich aus [George's] 'furcht vorm entstehen neuer geistiger bücher überhaupt — nicht aus einer abneigung gegen *Ihren* Platon.' [George] habe das ganze Buch (wohl das Manuskript) aufmerksam gelesen und darin viel Bemerkenswertes gefunden."

[96] On Hildebrandt's habilitation, *ZT*, 353, for 20 November 1927, citing Berthold Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1967), 92–97. On the manuscript's attack on Jaeger as "sehr einverstanden," see *ZT*, 358, for 4 October 1928, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 190.

[97] Kurt Hildebrandt to Stefan George, 15 May 1917, Hildebrandt 3, 1901, StGA.

[98] Letter from Kurt Hildebrandt to Friedrich Gundolf, dated 17 August 1921, with undated précis titled "Plato und Nietzsche," in the Gundolf Archive.

[99] *ZT*, 377, citing Vallentin, *Gespräche*, 129–34; and 380, for 14 September 1931, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 198–200.

[100] *ZT*, 383, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 213–17. Note George's interest in Christianity.

[101] George 2, 1887–99 inclusive, StGA.

[102] *ZT*, 384, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 218, 227.

[103] *ZT*, 384, citing an interview with Georg Peter Landmann in Basel; and 385, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 200–202. The book by Boehringer was *Das Antlitz des Genius: Platon* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1935). On the plan to translate the *Phaedrus*, see *ZT*, 385, citing interview with Georg Peter Landmann, and 386, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 221.

[104] Stefan George to Kurt Hildebrandt, 6 March 1933, George 2, 1899A, StGA.

[105] Kurt Hildebrandt, *Nietzsches Wettkampf mit Sokrates und Plato* (Dresden: Sibyllen-Verlag, 1922), dedicated to Ernst Gundolf. Consider the remark that "Hildebrandts Heroen sind Nietzsche und Platon," made by Volker Gerhardt, Reinhard Mehring, and Jana Rindert, *Berliner Geist: Eine Geschichte der Berliner Universitätsphilosophie bis 1946* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999), 251, which contains a brief discussion of Hildebrandt's books, including the sequel *Nietzsche als Richter unserer Zeit* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1923), and his troubled attempt at a habilitation. He wrote several other works on Nietzsche, including the medically informed *Gesundheit und Krankheit in Nietzsches Leben und Werk* (Berlin: S. Karger, 1926).

[106] Hildebrandt, *Platon: der Kampfe des Geistes um die Macht* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1933), 395–96. In the brief endnotes, Hildebrandt refers to his earlier work on race and eugenics in Plato: "Dass Platon Gründer der eugenischen [Theorie] ist, haben schon die Vertreter der rassenhygienischen Bewegung in Deutschland betont. Ich habe in 'Norm und Entartung des Staates' und in 'Staat und Rasse' Platon als Vorbild für die leibliche und geistige Bewirkung, die eugenische Züchtung und den geistigen Staat herausgehoben." As I noted in *Plato's Progeny*, 153n44, in the second edition, published as *Platon: Logos und Mythos* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter [1959], 392), Hildebrandt deleted these two sentences and replaced them with the following: "Dass Platon der Gründer der eugenischen

Lehre ist, erkannten schon die Begründer dieser Bewegung in England und Amerika gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts. (Vgl. mein 'Norm und Verfall des Staates'. Dresden. 1920)." In the "Anmerkungen" to the Horneffer translation (in both the 1933 and the 1939 edition), Hildebrandt makes special mention of Wilhelm Andreae's 1925 edition and translation of the *Republic*, of which he remarks "die Frage der Eugenik ist darin herausgehoben" (Hildebrandt, *Platon*, 361); he also generally recommends the books on Plato by Friedemann, Salin, and Singer. Hildebrandt's 1933 speech "Individualität und Gemeinschaft" was published with a dedication to Andreae.

[107] Kurt Hildebrandt to Stefan George, 21 February 1933, George 3, 5986, StGA.

[108] In Landmann's words, partially quoting George: "das Schicksal der deutschen Juden halte er nur für einen Teil dessen, 'was Deutschland in den nächsten fünfzig Jahren bevorsteht,'" in *ZT*, 388, for 19 September 1933, citing Edith Landmann, *Gespräche*, 209.

[109] *ZT*, 384, citing an interview with Georg Peter Landmann in Basel; and 385, citing Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 200–202. The Boehringer book was *Das Antlitz des Genius: Platon*.

[110] Hildebrandt, introduction to *Platon: Der Staat*, trans. August Horneffer (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1933), vii–xxxvi; here, ix for all preceding quotations in this paragraph; the same in the 1939 edition published in Stuttgart, though the introduction there varies slightly on x–xi. Nothing hangs on that variation for present purposes, so below I shall quote from the 1933 edition only, but in all cases the page number of quotations is the same in the 1939 edition. Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *H* and page number.

[111] See also his comments on the dialogue in the same edition (Hildebrandt, "Anmerkungen," 361–76), in which he states in a note to 292–322 that Plato's "Abschätzung des *Tyrannen*" is not "eine grundsätzliche moralische Verwerfung oder eine doktrinäre Verfassungstheorie"; on the contrary, "Platon ist, im Gegensatz zu den Ideologen, der große Realist" (371). This denial of Plato's hatred of tyranny is a cardinal difference from most modern readings, including my own, as seen in Melissa Lane, introduction to *Plato: The Republic*, trans. Desmond Lee (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2007), xi–xl.

[112] Kurt Hildebrandt, *Individualität und Gemeinschaft: Festrede auf dem Herbstfeste des Sudetendeutschen Kameradschaftsbundes in Schloss Heinrichsruh bei Teplitz* (Berlin: Die Runde, 1933), 9.

[113] Hildebrandt, *Individualität und Gemeinschaft*, 10, 13. My suggestion is not that Hildebrandt was signaling a lack of loyalty to Hitler, only that he was struggling to assert an even higher loyalty to George.

[114] Kurt Hildebrandt, *Deutsche Wissenschaft: Vortrag, gehalten vor den Fachschaften der Kieler Studentenschaft am 6. Juni 1934 = Kieler Vorträge über Volkstums- und Grenzlandfragen und den nordisch-baltischen Raum 7* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz, 1934), 6.

[115] Hildebrandt, *Deutsche Wissenschaft*, 5–6.
[116] Hildebrandt, *Deutsche Wissenschaft*, 6.
[117] Kurt Hildebrandt, "Verfall des Staates und physische Entartung," *Nationalwirtschaft* 2, no. 3 (1928/29): 321. In the same pamphlet, which was published as an offprint, he even abjures "Rassen Chauvinismus," defending a mixing of the "nordische" and "mitteländische" races and the "Eigenwert" of "die Neger," but not mentioning Jews in this context.
[118] Otto Neurath and J. A. Lauwerys wrote two articles about "Nazi Textbooks and the Future" in the London-based *The Journal of Education* towards the end of the war: Otto Neurath and J. A. Lauwerys, "Nazi Textbooks and the Future," parts 1 and 2, *The Journal of Education*, November 1944: 521–22; December 1944, 574–76. In the latter, they referred to the discussion of Friedrich II, and more generally, to "the fact that so many books, especially German ones, though scholarly, are permeated by antidemocratic feeling and full of admiration for strong and ruthless brutes. This mood is supported by men of reputation like Stefan George (Kantorowicz has been connected with the George Circle, and a swastika appeared on the title page of his book, a swastika which did not indicate Nazism as such), or F. Nietzsche who stressed the resemblance of his own ideas with those of Frederic [*sic*] II. These are books which are basic sources for the writers of school texts . . . In future years a German text-book writer, afraid openly to praise Hitler and Nazism, may praise Plato and recommend the reading of the *Republic*, carefully quoting well-known English and American scholars who are reputed to be democratic and kind. Many people would not object to that; yet these German writers would be carrying on Nazi propaganda" (pt. 2, 575). They referred to Wieland, Fite, and Crossman as other authors who had unmasked the fascist tendencies of Plato in recent years. Neurath and Lauwerys responded to the considerable English controversy in the subsequent letters pages of the journal in respect of their treatment of Plato, in particular, by writing "Plato's *Republic* and German Education 1945," *The Journal of Education*, February 1945: 57–59. These episodes are discussed briefly in Lane, *Plato's Progeny*, 109–28, and Demetriou, "A 'Legend' in Crisis," 70–72 and 76n49.
[119] Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 580–82; here, 581, including the remark, "Von der kompromisslosen Ablehnung der parlamentarischen Demokratie zu ihrer Zerstörung war es nur ein kleiner Schritt," though also stressing that George never made his political vision precise, 580. See also Orozco, "Die Platon-Rezeption," 168: "In diesem plastischen Herrschaftsmodell [based on Plato] findet der Konsens um die autoritäre Reform des Staates, der im historischen Kompromiss zwischen den völkischen Fraktionen und dem national-konservativen 'Geist von Potsdam' den Nationalsozialismus konsolidierte, seinen Niederschlag."
[120] I am most grateful to the following people and institutions for facilitating access to archival and library resources: Martin Liebscher and the staff of the Germanic Studies Library in London, for use of the Gundolf Archive; Michael Defuster, director of the Castrum Peregrini foundation in Amsterdam; Dr Ute Oelmann, director, and staff of the Stefan George-Archiv in Stuttgart; the Warburg

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8: Political Economy as *Geisteswissenschaft:* Edgar Salin and Other Economists around George

Bertram Schefold

THE AIM OF THIS ESSAY is to examine the role of the economists among Stefan George's followers and the more distant associates of his Circle.[1] Many of those followers — in my view the best and closest — either emigrated after 1933 or eventually joined the opposition against Hitler and the Nazi regime.[2] That they included a large number of economists is striking not least because George, having rejected the socio-economic corollaries of modernity, did not contemplate any alternative models of economic organization.[3] He did not call for a planned economy nor did he envision any economic utopias, and he did not decry any specific aspects of the capitalist system. Neither did he seem particularly interested in the so-called irrational aspects of the economy, such as entrepreneurship, or the fateful effects of economic crises. The principal objects of George's criticism were commercialism and materialism. In his poem "Der Krieg" (1917), he presents the economic sphere, which he associates with "Sachwalter, händler, schreiber — pfiff und zahl," as the opposite, indeed the negation of, the realm of poetry. George had already denounced the existing economic system in *Der Stern des Bundes* (1914), where he projects a vision of the good life that is fundamentally at odds with the utilitarian considerations of professional economists.[4]

This essay investigates the ways in which the economists around George dealt with this tension. In particular, it seeks to determine whether George's influence prompted his followers to project alternatives to the economic status quo in contemporary Europe, indeed whether it had any impact at all on their scholarly work. Their responses, as we shall see, were extremely varied — so varied, in fact, that it is necessary to consider them in the context of their individual biographies. The essay begins with a detailed discussion of Edgar Salin, arguably the most influential economic theorist to emerge from the Circle, and certainly the one most attached to George. It then considers, somewhat more briefly, three economists — Friedrich Wolters, Arthur Salz, and Kurt Singer — who were more remote either from the field of political economy (Wolters) or from George and

his Circle (Salz and Singer). The essay concludes with a few general reflections on the specific roles that Georgean notions such as wholeness (*Ganzheit* or *Ganzheitlichkeit*), intuitive vision (*Schau* or *Anschauung*), and the great individual or hero played in their work.

Edgar Salin in Heidelberg: Between the Weber Brothers and Stefan George

Edgar Salin (1892–1974) was a brilliant economist and man of letters, who used his exceptional political perspicacity as well as his profound knowledge of economic history to advise political and industrial leaders, educate generations of students, including Carl Christian von Weizsäcker, Marion Dönhoff, and Talcott Parsons, and influence public opinion. Alongside many other achievements as a researcher, pedagogue, and public intellectual, he cofounded the Friedrich List Society (*Friedrich List-Gesellschaft*) in 1925, which he also helped to reestablish in 1954, launched the international economic journal *Kyklos* in 1947, and set up the economic research institute *Prognos* in 1959.

Insofar as it examines Salin primarily as an economist and follower of Stefan George, this essay ignores most of his later career, such as the Keynesian employment program that he devised for the city of Basel, his lecture series (later published as a book) on Nietzsche and Burckhardt,[5] and his work for the List Society after the Second World War. His scholarly output was characterized by a decidedly interdisciplinary approach, which accounts both for its originality and for the increasing isolation that its author experienced in the 1950s, when his unorthodox treatment of economics as a human science fell in disregard.[6] For a time, his methods were debated in the professional association of German-speaking economists, the German Economic Association (*Verein für Socialpolitik*), famously chaired by Gustav Schmoller in the years 1890 to 1917, and left a lasting impression on some of its members. Ultimately, however, he was not able to stem the trend towards a more narrowly empirical form of economic scholarship.[7]

Salin was a German Jew who had the good fortune of being offered a chair in economics at the University of Basel in 1927. He occupied this chair for the remainder of his academic career (that is, until his retirement in 1962), showing shrewdness and foresight when he declined an attractive offer from the Prussian minister of education in 1928. Salin played an active role in Swiss economics and politics, especially during the Second World War, and then in German and European affairs, as an ardent supporter of European integration. He frequently visited Israel, overseeing various research projects and maintaining a close relationship with the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot.[8]

Salin's deepest commitment was to humanism and he was exceedingly well-read in German as well as Greco-Roman literature and philosophy. George exerted a firm hold on his imagination ever since their first encounter in Heidelberg in 1913, when Salin was still a student. Not least through the mediation of Friedrich Gundolf, Salin became an associate of George, though he was by no means a favorite and never belonged to the inner core of the Circle.[9] At the same time, however, Salin was a student of Alfred Weber and an admirer of Max Weber. During his formative years in Heidelberg, he was thus exposed to fundamentally different cultural and intellectual influences. George and his Circle opposed the prevailing manifestations of modernity and cultivated a counterculture devoted to art and the beautiful life (*das schöne Leben*), while the Weber brothers viewed disenchantment through rationalization, the growth of industrial civilization, democratization and cultural leveling as the inevitable products of modernization that could not be altered, only modified. Thus Alfred Weber favored an agrarian policy that would somewhat mitigate the problematic effects of industrial society.[10]

Salin's multidisciplinary approach to economics and his decision to pursue his scholarly interests in other fields was probably a response to these competing influences.[11] Alongside his career in economics, he was a cultural historian, an interpreter of Nietzsche and Burckhardt, the author of an important book on Stefan George, and the translator of several Platonic dialogues.[12] In his work as a historian of economic thought, he came closest to synthesizing these different interests and approaches.[13] He had a unique gift for interpreting the concepts of past economists in their political and cultural contexts, and he developed a new "intuitive theory" (*anschauliche Theorie*) in economics, which combined analytical and historical methods.[14]

The group of *Georgeaner* that Salin became associated with in 1913 belonged to a flourishing branch of the Circle that had formed in Heidelberg and that is sometimes referred to as the "Heidelberger Kreis." The latter already included a number of devoted acolytes, the literary historian Friedrich Gundolf, also of Jewish origin, being the most prominent among them. Salin later evinced an almost boundless commitment to the Master in his memoirs, but George himself remained comparatively reserved towards the young economist, who was always much closer to Gundolf. Meanwhile, Salin had joined another circle of sorts — namely that around Max Weber. There were several encounters between Weber and George, which have been recorded in Marianne Weber's *Lebensbild* of her husband as well as in Friedrich Wolters's history of the George Circle, the so-called *Blättergeschichte*.[15] Another important source of inspiration for Salin was the political economist Eberhard Gothein (1853–1923). Professor for *Volkswirtschaftslehre* at the University of Heidelberg from 1904 to 1923, Gothein was a man of stupendous erudition, famed for his

research into economic history and for his cultural history of Southern Italy, which continued and complemented the work of Jacob Burckhardt. Gothein was familiar with George but never close to him, though his son Percy became one of the Master's favorite disciples for a while. At Heidelberg, Gothein pioneered an interdisciplinary approach to economic history, one that considered material as well as ideational factors. This approach lastingly shaped Salin's later works in economic history.[16] Gothein represented a methodological tradition in economic history that the economists around George sought to appropriate and, at the same time, transcend.[17]

Max Weber mentions George as a charismatic figure in his writings on the sociology of religion.[18] While he admired George's verse, Weber disapproved of his increasingly prophetic stance and his self-deification that in Weber's eyes diminished his impact as a poet. Though other members of the Circle were fiercely critical of Weber's conception of *Wissenschaft*,[19] Friedrich Wolters greatly admired Weber's personal integrity and his seriousness as a scholar. As an economist in the tradition of the Historical School, Wolters was able to appreciate Weber's vast erudition. At the same time, he portrayed Weber as an ascetic, deprived of the fullness of being because of the barren cultural environment of his youth. For Wolters, the professionalization of *Wissenschaft* that Weber demanded ultimately meant an impoverishment of the humanities; the scholar's true task was to overcome the limits of *Wissenschaft* and to engage in cultural creation in the service of the living spirit.[20] George shared Wolters's ambivalent assessment of Weber. Though he was impressed by Weber's personality when he met him — introduced by Gundolf — in Heidelberg in 1910, George denounced Weber's notion of "value-free" science and his resigned acceptance of the inevitability of progress. George, who was something of a proto-environmentalist in this respect, considered industrial and technological progress as an active threat to nature as well as to his idea of a higher humanity.

Salin, for his part, though his commitment to George was unconditional, nonetheless admired Max Weber. Because the latter refused to receive, as a matter of principle, students of his brother Alfred, Salin did not get to know him while enrolled at the University of Heidelberg. They first met in Rome in 1913, and their encounter left a mixed impression on Salin. Though he thought Weber was an imposing figure, with a rigorously analytical mind, Salin felt that he, in contrast to his brother, lacked artistic interests and talents; Weber had an entirely Northern, "puritan" character, without any traces of the South or a glimmer of the Romance spirit in him. Unable to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of Roman art, Salin observed, Weber felt compelled to explain them. Salin was also surprised to find that Weber vehemently objected to the notion of a "Gothic spirit" in late medieval art. The Gothic style, Weber declared, was a particular architectural technique and had nothing to do with anything spiritual.[21]

At one of the discussion evenings that brought *Weberianer* and *Georgeaner* together in Heidelberg, Salin gave a short introductory address on the method and meaning of historical study. In attendance were Eberhard Gothein and his wife Marie Luise, Max and Alfred Weber, Gundolf and most members of the Heidelberger Kreis, as well as Jaspers and various other guests. The unquestionable climax of the evening, however, was the subsequent speech by Max Weber. In part provoked by Salin's opening remarks, Weber polemically laid out the potential as well as the limits of a scientific approach to history. Anticipating some of the ideas he would develop in his celebrated 1917 lecture *Wissenschaft als Beruf*, Weber called for a value-free (*wertfrei*) historical science, defined by specialization and sobriety (*Sachlichkeit*).[22] Weber's speech lasted almost two hours, and it was close to midnight by the time he concluded, so Salin was not in a position to offer an elaborate response. Instead, he challenged Weber by asking him what he thought of Theodor Mommsen's celebrated *Römische Geschichte* (1854–56), which clearly did not meet Weber's criteria for scientific history. Weber replied emphatically: "Das ist keine Wissenschaft!" To which Salin retorted: "Dann weiß ich nicht, welchem Lebendigen Ihre Wissenschaft noch dienen kann und warum sie für uns von Interesse sein soll."[23] Erich von Kahler would later provide a more expansive response to Weber's arguments in his 1921 polemic *Der Beruf der Wissenschaft*, which, incidentally, did not meet with George's approval.[24] The confrontations with Weber nonetheless strongly suggest that with his emphasis on art (*Kunst*), spirit (*Geist)*, and life (*Leben*), Salin's conception of *Wissenschaft* was considerably closer to George's than to Weber's.[25]

Alfred Weber, though he was no less critical of George than his brother Max, proved to be a more powerful inspiration. This had a lot to do with the fact that he was almost solely responsible for Salin's training in economic theory. It was Alfred Weber who taught Salin that the rapid development of Western capitalism posed a threat to Europe's cultural traditions. Weber also drew his attention to the fragility of the political institutions established by Bismarck and predicted the great military upheaval that would come in 1914. Unlike George, Alfred Weber did not believe that the renewal of European culture necessitated the prior destruction of the old bourgeois order. If George and his followers were radicals, Weber was a reformist and a synthesizer. As a *Nationalökonom* or political economist, he attempted to combine theoretical and causal models with historical and cultural analysis. In the field of sociology, too, Weber sought to analyze social change in relation to technological and institutional as well as intellectual and cultural processes.[26] Under Weber's supervision, Salin wrote a dissertation on the economic development of Alaska in the wake of the gold rush for which he was awarded a doctorate in 1913.[27] Weber frequently organized discussion groups and seminars to which he invited guest speakers from abroad, a tradition that Salin was to introduce,

subsequently, at the University of Basel and one he continued long after his retirement. More than anything else, however, it was Weber's cultural and aesthetic sensibilities that attracted Salin, who saw in his academic teacher both a rigorous scholar and a passionate human being of great integrity. The latter qualities made themselves particularly felt after the Nazi seizure of power in 1933.[28] On his deathbed, Salin told the dignitaries of Basel that his work at the city's university had been shaped by the promise he had once made to Alfred Weber to teach "socio-economics" — a blend of economic theory, economic history and political economy — and that he had remained faithful to this mission to the end.

Salin was already familiar with the later variants of neoclassical economic theory when he started teaching as an associate (*außerordentlicher*) professor at Heidelberg University in 1924. Oral tradition has it that students referred to him as *Herr Grenznutzen* ("Mr. Marginal Utility"), in allusion to the so-called "marginal revolution" brought about by a number of economists in the late nineteenth century, notably Jevons, Menger, Walras, and Pareto, who replaced the labor theory of value with neoclassical value theory and transformed the study of economics into a rigorously mathematical, scientific discipline. However, Salin's publications as well as his work as a teacher suggest that he sought to combine the empiricist, quantitative methods of neoclassical theory with a more holistic, qualitative approach that took account of the nonrational elements of economics and that considered economics as part of a larger social whole, thus questioning the categorical distinction drawn by neoclassical theorists between the domain of economics and all other domains of human activity. Indeed, Salin's main goal was to transform economics into a discipline within the humanities or *Geisteswissenschaften*.[29] This was intimately connected with his aim to place economics in the service of society. Writing as a conservative liberal and a humanist, he defined the task of the modern economist to discover ways that would allow the individual as well as the collective in the capitalist societies of the West "das noch erreichbare Maß an persönlicher, wirtschaftlicher und sozialer Freiheit zu wahren."[30] Capitalist development was a complex process that affected all aspects of human life. It thus could not be analyzed with purely formal, scientific methods, i.e., in terms of rational choice, marginal utility, profit maximization, and so on. The point, according to Salin, was to investigate the ways in which European society had become subjected, historically, to the forces of capitalism, and to understand these forces with the methods of the humanities. At times, his critique of modern capitalism seems to echo Marx, and indeed Salin mentions that the Weber brothers had made him read *Das Kapital*. With a characteristic mixture of disdain and outrage, he described the globalized capitalist economy as a struggle between nations of peddlers for feeding grounds.[31] In a similar vein, he remarked in 1956 that the combined effects of atomic energy and automation, the latest "achievements"

of modern industry, had turned technology into a means of oppression and enslavement.[32] Such observations echoed George's more general warnings about industrialization, technology, and the domination of nature, for instance, in the late poem "Der Mensch und der Drud," first published in 1928.

Contemptuous of formalistic model-building, Salin felt a certain affinity to the theories developed by Keynes and Schumpeter. He valued Keynes primarily as a man of action and an economic advisor, a gifted writer, and as an honest critic of the Treaty of Versailles. Despite his general admiration for Keynes's work, it seems that he could not get his head around the *General Theory*. Salin held Schumpeter in high regard for his historical perspective and for his sociological analysis of entrepreneurship, which he adopted in part, though he was anxious to emphasize that the entrepreneurial capitalism of the nineteenth century was quite distinct from the managerial capitalism of the twentieth century. Alongside Weber and, of course, George, Schumpeter and Keynes inspired Salin's critique of neo-classical theory, in particular his insistence that economics could not be explained solely in terms of rational choices or even the interactions of rational agents. Although he conceded that neo-classical economics offered important insights, he believed that it only yielded partial knowledge (*Teilerkenntnis*). It had to be complemented by — indeed, incorporated in — the more comprehensive, holistic understanding (*Gesamterkenntnis*) provided by intuitive vision (*geistige Anschauung*), to use the terminology of Edith Landmann's 1923 study *Die Transcendenz des Erkennens*, arguably the only and certainly the most important attempt to provide a systematic epistemological account of the George Circle's views on *Wissenschaft*.[33] Striving for such *Gesamterkenntnis*, Salin's work in the field of *Nationalökonomie* was thoroughly interdisciplinary, drawing on the methods of history, sociology, and psychology. As has been indicated above, he considered economics as a subdiscipline of the humanities. Accordingly, in 1951, he dedicated the fourth edition of his *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre* to the philosophical faculties of the universities of Heidelberg and Basel as "Orte des lebendigen Humanismus," alluding to the inscription for the new auditorium at Heidelberg University coined by Friedrich Gundolf in 1930, "Dem lebendigen Geist," which the Nazis had changed to "Dem deutschen Geist" in 1936.[34]

Salin's unique approach to economics is evident in nearly all his publications, beginning with his *Habilitationsschrift*. The latter, entitled *Platon und die griechische Utopie* (1921), examined Plato's political thought, in particular his conception of the state.[35] As Melissa Lane has shown in her contribution to this volume, the members of the George Circle thought of themselves as a reincarnation of Plato's Academy, and George sometimes referred to his followers as his "staat" or state. Salin continued the attempts by associates of the Circle, beginning with Heinrich

Friedemann's *Platon: Seine Gestalt* (1914), to interpret Plato's work in the spirit of George. Like Gadamer many years later,[36] Salin interpreted Plato's political writings, notably the *Republic* and the *Laws*, as fundamentally utopian texts and as part of a larger pedagogical program. Salin recounts how, during the writing of his *Habilitationsschrift*, he began to toy with the hypothesis that in the *Laws* Plato had drawn on material collected by the young Aristotle. This was a theory he could not substantiate, but George was so fascinated by it that he urged Salin, with characteristic self-assurance, to take his assent in place of proof.[37] Salin's next major publication was a study of *De Civitate Dei*, published in 1926, in which he argued that Augustine's treatise was profoundly indebted to Platonic ideas.[38] Already in 1921, he had produced a general survey of economic research in Germany and the first version of his *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre*, which caused a stir because it denounced as outdated the work of Gustav Schmoller, the leader of the "younger" Historical School of economics.[39]

In this history, Salin expressed his admiration for Max Weber, whose work in political economy he considered far superior to that of his predecessors. Weber, he remarked, had pushed himself relentlessly to forge the conceptual instruments that would allow him to categorize and evaluate a vast amount of sociological, historical, and economic data. His great achievement, according to Salin, was to develop the notion of the ideal type and to set up new and heuristically fruitful theories for macroeconomic research. At the same time, he was critical of Weber, pointing out that he had helped to establish the phantom of objectivity in the human sciences and thus eroded the idea of the individual as a metaphysically grounded being, which for Salin was central to the study not just of economics, but all social sciences.[40] Salin's attempt to restore this idea was not informed by any irrationalist or antirationalist assumptions; rather, it was rooted in his humanist ethics. This humanism, however, was neither universal nor democratic. Salin was convinced that the values he believed in could only be made manifest and meaningful if they were enacted by an elite of extraordinarily gifted men. In some of his writings, notably his polemic against the war reparations imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, *Die deutschen Tribute. Zwölf Reden gegen den Young-Plan* (1930), he took this elitism to precarious heights.[41]

Salin's work as an economic historian was considerably less controversial, though in his *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre* of 1923 he criticized not just Schmoller, but also the representatives of the "older" Historical School. Of Karl Knies (1821–98), its foremost methodologist, he remarked that he had failed to adhere to his own program; Wilhelm Roscher (1817–94), he argued, lacked the intellectual abilities to combine history and theory; and Bruno Hildebrand (1812–78), he quipped, had discovered his "stages" theory of economic development with a divining rod. Salin's critique of the Historical School reflects his own agendas as an economist,

which consisted in a synthesis of neoclassical and historical schools, of empiricist and intuitive methods. More than most of his colleagues, he sought to complement and indeed to transcend the positivist orientation of contemporary economics with a more holistic, anschaulich approach that took account of the cultural and intellectual contexts of each historical transformation in the grand process of economic development. The same agenda is discernible in his works on economic policy, for instance, that of the European Economic Community, and his scattered publications on the economic history of classical antiquity.[42]

These writings reveal a breadth of knowledge, a panoramic, indeed universal, outlook on Western civilization and a rich, multidisciplinary methodology that is in some ways reminiscent of Max Weber. His fusion of theory and causal models, on the one hand, and historical as well as sociological and cultural analysis, on the other, was influenced by his teacher Alfred Weber. But there can be little doubt that the main inspirations for his work as a *Nationalökonom* came from Stefan George. In particular, Salin's attempt to overcome the "rein rationale Theorie" (purely rational theory) of neo-classical economics and to formulate an "anschauliche Theorie" (intuitive theory) was Georgean in the sense that it incorporated central aspects of George's thinking, notably his critique of the positivist orientation and the increasing specialization of the sciences, which dissected the objects of analysis, thus failing to understand their larger significance or *Gestalt* that was always more than the sum of their parts. For George, this *Gestalt* could not be comprehended in purely rational terms. The rational-scientific approach only led to what Edith Landmann called *Teilerkenntnis* (partial knowledge), which had to be subordinated to *Gesamterkenntnis* (full or comprehensive knowledge).[43] *Gesamterkenntnis* of a phenomenon required intuitive vision or *Schau*. *Schau* was based on an *Erlebnis* (inner experience) and, as such, was noncognitive, subjective, spontaneous. It was also holistic in that it grasped the phenomenon in its totality and thus captured its spiritual essence or *Wesen*. Its goal was not the accumulation of (factual) knowledge but, ultimately, the enhancement of life. Insofar as it presupposed a certain affinity between the knowing subject and the object of his knowing, *Schau*, according to George, was the work of genius: it pertained to specially gifted individuals and could not be taught to the masses. Its results, similarly, could not be appreciated by the multitude, but only by a select audience. As has been indicated above, Salin adopted some of the elitist, antidemocratic aspects of George's critique of science, which was part of his larger critique of modernity. He nonetheless managed to captivate a large public with his immense erudition, subtle wit, and the originality of his insights. He also took on board another aspect of George's critique of modernity. There are frequent echoes, especially in his postwar writings, of George's denunciation of the domination and exploitation of nature and the impoverishment

of human existence in the wake of capitalism's triumphant advance in the West. In contrast to Max Weber, George did not resign himself to the disenchantment of the world as an inevitable product of rationalization and modernization. Salin, similarly, did not attempt a *wertfrei* interpretation of modern economics, but presented his analyses of the historical as well as the current formations of capitalism in a decidedly critical fashion. More than any other member of the Circle, he made George's thinking relevant and fruitful to the field of political economy.

Friedrich Wolters: *Wissenschaft* as *Dienst*

Even though Friedrich Wolters (1876–1930) occupied a much more central position in the Circle than Salin, his work as an economic historian was less obviously influenced by George. This may have to do with the fact that he chose to serve George, whom he venerated with an almost religious fervor, in other ways. At the same time, there are undeniable traces, as will be demonstrated below, of George's thinking in Wolters's scholarship. These traces are also discernible in Wolters's methodological writings. Already in the second *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* (1911), he called for a new form of biography based on the concept of *Gestalt*, that is, the intuitive, holistic assessment of the essential significance of a person's life and work and its artistic representation in a vivid image (*plastisches Bild*).[44] This notion of *Gestalt* biography defined the brand of *Geistesgeschichte* practiced by members of the Circle in the 1910s and 1920s, in particular the works of Heinrich Friedemann and Friedrich Gundolf.[45] It could also be argued that Wolters's academic work was in itself a form of service to George, who liked to see his disciples occupy positions in higher education so that they could mold the German youth in his spirit and recruit the best of them for his Circle. The five-volume textbook entitled *Der Deutsche* that Wolters edited between 1925 and 1927 was evidently conceived as a contribution to this pedagogical mission. Its principal aim was to give German high school students a historical survey of Western civilization from a Georgean perspective. In accordance with George's educational principles, Wolters intended to provide his youthful readers with comprehensive *Bildung*, not a "wissenschaftliche Einstellung auf Sachlichkeit."[46] Though he took these pedagogical tasks very seriously, Wolters did not accord much importance to his academic position or his scholarly work. Trained as an economist under Gustav Schmoller, his early research showed great promise, but the professorial chair he eventually occupied in Kiel was in history and most of his publications in the final — and most productive — decade of his life dealt with other topics. By examining his writings in the field of economic history, this section of my essay, consequently, concentrates on an aspect of his work that Wolters himself probably regarded

as secondary. It largely ignores his writings on and for George, notably the *Blättergeschichte* of 1929/30, and also passes over his translations of medieval hymns, his own poetry, and the increasingly nationalist pamphlets he published after the First World War.[47]

Wolters was born on 2 September 1876 in Uerdingen near Krefeld, on the left bank of the lower Rhine. He was raised as a Catholic and remained attached to the Rhineland all his life. At the age of twenty-two, he passed his *Abitur* at a Gymnasium in Mönchengladbach, then enrolled at the University of Freiburg to study history, languages, and philosophy. After only one semester, however, he transferred to the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where he read economic history, anthropology, and history of art. From 1899 onwards, he majored in history, political *Nationalökonomie*, and *Germanistik* at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin. His most important teachers at Berlin were Gustav Schmoller and the polymath historian Kurt Breysig (1866–1940), who was himself a student of Schmoller, but also on friendly terms with George, to whom he introduced some of his most promising students, including Berthold Vallentin. In the early 1900s, Wolters became associated with the intellectual circle that had formed around Breysig in Niederschönhausen near Berlin, where he met his later friends Friedrich Andreae and Rudolf von Heckel as well as Vallentin, Vallentin's wife Diana, Kurt Hildebrandt, and Wilhelm Andreae. Wolters met George in 1904, through the mediation of Vallentin and Breysig, and was immediately captivated by him. George, by contrast, took little notice of Wolters initially. Wolters's 1908 essay *Herrschaft und Dienst*, however, attracted his attention and he agreed to its publication: first, in excerpts, in the eighth volume of the *Blätter für die Kunst* and, subsequently, in book form by the *Verlag der Blätter für die Kunst*. By 1910, when he took over the editorship of the *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* in collaboration with Gundolf, Wolters had attained a more prominent position in the Circle and, although he still failed to establish warm personal relations with George, soon became the latter's chief propagandist or "Paulus," as Norbert von Hellingrath called him.[48] In the 1920s, he became one of the most influential disciples, introducing two of George's late favorites, Johann Anton and Max Kommerell, to the Circle, and publishing the "authorized" history of George's "staat," the so-called *Blättergeschichte* (1929), which met with a mixed reception, especially among the Jewish disciples. Though George was critical of Wolters's increasingly nationalistic agitation after the First World War, notably against the Treaty of Versailles and the French occupation of the Rhineland, he allowed him to act as his hagiographer and unreservedly supported his work on the *Blättergeschichte*.

Wolters's career trajectory in academia, meanwhile, was somewhat less linear. In 1903, he received his doctorate for a dissertation he had written under the supervision of Schmoller on the agrarian economy in eight-

eenth-century France, *Studien über Agrarzustände und Agrarprobleme in Frankreich von 1700 bis 1790*. Owing to his many Georgean commitments, however, he did not complete his *Habilitation* until 1913. After a brief stint as *Privatdozent* at the University of Berlin, Wolters was drafted and served as driver and courier in France, Serbia, and Macedonia for almost the entire duration of the Great War, which proved to be a formative experience for him. Returning from the war, he became *außerordentlicher Professor* at the Philipps-Universität in Marburg in 1920, and three years later, obtained a tenured professorship (*Ordinariat*) in medieval and modern history ("mittlere und neue Geschichte") at the University of Kiel, thanks largely to the intervention of Carl Heinrich Becker, who as state secretary of the Prussian ministry of education was responsible for the academic appointments of various members of the Circle. Given that most of his work was nonacademic, it comes as no surprise that Wolters's professorial career ended in Kiel; the surprising thing, rather, is that he was given a professorship at all. After submitting his *Habilitationsschrift* on the fiscal and military policy of Brandenburg-Prussia in the seventeenth century,[49] he published only four minor essays that fell, more or less, within the field of economic history.[50] Though he acted as director of the *Historisches Seminar* and president of the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Universitätsgesellschaft*, he devoted most of his time at the University of Kiel to completing the monumental *Blättergeschichte* that he had begun in 1913, right after handing in his *Habilitation*. Shortly after the publication of his magnum opus,[51] Wolters died on 14 April 1930 of a coronary thrombosis, having suffered from heart disease since his military service. His first wife Erika, *née* Schwartzkopff, had passed away five years earlier. George had held her in great esteem — one of the few instances in the history of the Circle that show him equally attached to both spouses of a married couple.[52]

Wolters's first publication, a revised and significantly enlarged version of his doctoral dissertation, was an impressive piece of scholarship,[53] based on extensive archival research at the Bibliothèque Nationale, where he was working in 1900 and 1901. It is impossible to provide a full summary of this wide-ranging study on French agriculture in the eighteenth century. One of its most interesting sections contains a survey of French economic thought in this period, much broader in scope than the accounts usually found in the relevant monographs, which focus almost exclusively on the Physiocrats. In this survey, Wolters throws new light on a number of under-researched aspects in the genesis of modern French economic theory, revealing their philosophical underpinnings. For instance, he argues that the various schools in eighteenth-century French economic thought drew heavily on ancient philosophy, notably Epicureanism and Stoicism. Similarly, he demonstrates that the interpretations of the natural order put forth in the works of the Physiocrats and Rousseau were shaped by contemporary debates about natural rights. Exploring the intellectual origins

of the French Revolution, he examines the concept of communal property and considers treaties on the improvement of agriculture, in particular those of the early French economist Boisguilbert (1646–1714), which were also indebted to ideas of the ancients, especially Roman writers on agriculture such as Columella. All these considerations greatly deepened his discussion of Physiocracy.

Three years later, in 1908, Wolters published a separate essay on the theoretical foundations of absolutism in the seventeenth century in a *Festschrift* for Gustav Schmoller, which he coedited with Kurt Breysig, Berthold Vallentin, and Friedrich Andreae on the occasion of Schmoller's seventieth birthday.[54] In this essay, Wolters touched on some of the arguments that he would elaborate in his study *Herrschaft und Dienst*, published the following year, where he remarks: "'Herrschaft und Dienst' bezeichnen nicht nur wirtschaftliche Verträge, sondern 'lebendiges' Handeln lebendiger Menschen, so daß die einen erhaben sind, die anderen willig oder unwillig sich neigen."[55] "Über die theoretische Begründung des Absolutismus im 17. Jahrhundert" begins with an examination of feudal bonds in the medieval world, then turns to the Aristotelian theory of the state that was circulating in the sixteenth century, according to which the rulers' sovereign power was analogous to the patriarch's rule over his family. This was one of the justifications for the claim, so central to the theory of absolutism, that by relinquishing their freedom, the people empowered the monarch and endowed him with his sovereignty. Wolters contrasts this philosophical justification of absolutism, famously formulated by Bodin, with religious justifications that he considers less susceptible to the challenges launched by the subjects with reference to their rights. According to these religious justifications, the monarch's authority stems directly from God and the subjects have no right to judge, resist, or overthrow him. The eighteenth century, Wolters argues, sees the emergence of a new, enlightened, or rational justification of absolutist rule, which presents the ruler as the first servant of the state. Because of their proximity to social contract theories, Wolters considers these enlightened conceptions of monarchical rule not as the culmination of the idea of absolute sovereignty, but as a transitional stage between absolutism and the more democratic "Staatsformen unserer Zeit."[56]

In *Herrschaft und Dienst*, Wolters considers the meaning of rulership in the spiritual and cultural sphere. It is a programmatic essay that employs the image of a *Kreis* or circle and its *Herrscher* (ruler) to project an ideal organization of society. Though his name is never mentioned explicitly, the numerous references to his works and the frequent quotations from his poetry indicate that this *Herrscher* is Stefan George. There is a concentric hierarchy of followers surrounding this *Herrscher*, headed by an elite — Wolters calls them "Fühler des Geistes" — who stand closest to him and

serve him with utmost devotion and self-sacrifice. The *Reich* over which the ruler commands, however, is not of this world. It is an imaginary, interior realm — "Reich des Geistes" — and far removed, indeed opposed to the real world outside, which the ruler-poet-prophet denounces in his works. "Die spiegel seines inneren," Wolters writes with reference to George's introduction to *Die Bücher der Hirten- und Preisgedichte, der Sagen und Sänge und der hängenden Gärten* (1895), "in denen Antike, Gotik und Orient sich fangen, werfen nirgendwo das laute spiel der äusseren welt wieder, sondern lassen an der trauer einer gebärde, an lied und gebet einer sehnenden seele am traum eines grossen herzens das antlitz einer ganzen zeit erscheinen."[57] Wolters suggests that these poetic images and reflections, though they are in constant flux — "das bild des Geistigen Reichs . . . wechselt [ewig]"[58] —, nonetheless hint at something divine or at least transcendent:

> Ich bin ein funke nur vom heiligen feuer
> Ich bin ein droehnen nur der heiligen stimme.[59]

Dienst, insofar as it is service to the prophet of this sacred voice and the *Reich* heralded by him, is based on reverence and veneration. Those who submit to the *Herrscher* poet need to embrace his values and accept the hierarchies they underwrite.[60]

The book was sumptuously illustrated by Melchior Lechter, and Wolters seems to have taken considerable pride in it. He was disappointed, he once remarked, to discover that Eberhard Gothein thought of him as an economist rather than the author of *Herrschaft und Dienst*.[61] Though he was keen to write more works in the same vein, Wolters heeded George's admonition to complete his *Habilitation* and thus to secure an academic position. In 1915, his 650-page *Habilitationsschrift* was published as part of the prestigious series *Urkunden und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der inneren Politik des Kurfürsten Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg*, edited by Schmoller and Otto Hintze.[62] While George was not overly impressed by Wolters's academic output on the whole, he singled out his 1923 essay on the French politician Colbert for unconditional praise. Berthold Vallentin transmitted George's positive reaction to Wolters: "D. M. [der Meister, i.e., George] sagte außerordentliches zu seinem [i.e., the essay's] Lobe. Sie [i.e., Wolters] sind der Zauberer der das Licht in die blind gewordenen Augen der toten Gestalten schiesst."[63] In this essay, which appeared in the series *Meister der Politik*, edited by Erich Marcks and Karl-Alexander von Müller, Wolters presents Louis XIV's Controller-General of Finances (1665–83) not as a corrupt minister, as previous economic historians had done, but as an ambitious, powerful, and visionary statesman.[64] He sharply distinguishes Colbert's conception of absolutist rule and economic might from that championed by Louis XIV.

It was Colbert, Wolters points out, who secured Louis's rule when the king was still young: "nach kaum einem Jahrzehnt hatte er [Colbert] den Adel unterwürfig, den Klerus kriechend und den Dritten, am meisten belasteten Stand wenigstens gefügig gemacht."[65] He summarizes Colbert's mercantilist approach by paraphrasing his maxim: "Der Staat, der die größte Masse von Gold und Silber besitze, habe die politische und wirtschaftliche Vorherrschaft."[66] Wolters provides an insightful assessment of the intricate system of taxation and legislation that Colbert established, paying particular attention to the regulation of trade.[67] The ultimate goal of Colbert's mercantilist policies, as Wolters rightly observed, was economic autarky: "Ein ungeheures Bild von Kraft und Einheit schwebte Colbert vor: Wie es die großen Selbstversorgerreiche unserer Tage noch ersehnen, sollte auch sein Frankreich keines anderen mehr bedürfen, aber alle anderen sollten seiner bedürfen."[68] Despite his evident admiration for Colbert's achievements, Wolters by no means championed mercantilism, whether old or new. Ultimately, Colbert's purely economic vision of the world was limited: "mit der ganzen leidenschaftlichen Triebkraft des Homo oeconomicus, der die Organisation der Erzeugung für den einzigen Sinn des Weltgeschehens hält, suchte er das ganze Volk in die Richtung seines Wirtschaftswillens zu drängen."[69]

Wolters's essay on Colbert also dealt with military events such as the War of the League of Augsburg (1688–97), which led to French sovereignty over Alsace and established the Rhine as the Franco-German border. Wolters's account of these events was bound to arouse patriotic sentiments in his German audience that had witnessed the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine and the occupation of the Rhineland after the First World War. Wolters also touched on Louis's — unsuccessful — war against the Netherlands that led to his estrangement from Colbert. The Sun King, obsessed with the enhancement of his personal glory, was not willing to reduce military expenditure and repeatedly undermined the policies championed by his minister — notably, religious tolerance and the fortification of Paris. Despite the frustration of many of his aims, the legacy that Colbert left for Europe's economic development, in Wolters's assessment, was a positive one. Instead of condemning him, free-market capitalists, Wolters remarked, should be thankful to Colbert and erect a monument in his honor, with the following inscription: "Die schrankenlosen freien Kapitalisten. Dem unumschränkten Staatskapitalisten." According to Wolters, Colbert had laid the foundations for the modern capitalist state, and all that was lacking was sufficient room for manoeuvre for the individual entrepreneur.[70] The parallels with Bismarck were obvious. This implicitly positive assessment contrasts with George's well-known disapproval of the *Reichskanzler*. It draws attention to a more general disagreement between both men in their assessment of the German nation-state, especially after 1918.

George's attempts to curb Wolters's postwar chauvinism only met with limited success, as is evidenced by a booklet that Wolters published in 1925. Entitled *Der Donauübergang und der Einbruch in Serbien durch das IV. Reservekorps im Herbst 1915*, it recounted a military operation by the German army on the Eastern front in which Wolters himself had taken part.[71] Wolters had completed most of the manuscript in 1916, when he was stationed in Southern Macedonia. The larger strategic purpose of the operation he described in his book was to establish a link with the Turks, who were the main allies of the Central Powers in the First World War. Wolters's account of the 4th Reserve Corps' crossing of the Danube is not without merit, both as a piece of military history and as a vivid re-creation of the particular locations in which the military operations took place. At the same time, it reveals a strong nationalist bias and a certain revanchist animus — features that were even more pronounced in the manuscript of a speech that Wolters intended to deliver at the University of Kiel in 1929 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the promulgation of the Treaty of Versailles.

As the preface to the printed version indicates, the senate of the university had entrusted Wolters with the key address, but in the end decided to cancel his speech as they considered it too inflammatory.[72] *Die Bedingungen des Versailler Vertrages und ihre Begründung* combines a moderately critical account of German policies prior to 1914 with a passionate attack on the reparation demands of the Entente powers at Versailles, which, Wolters argues, far exceeded Germany's economic resources. Wolters begins his criticism of the Versailles Treaty with an assessment of Germany's economic expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century, which was dramatically accelerated by the foundation of the Second Reich in 1871. As an imperial power, according to Wolters, the new empire sought peaceful penetration of foreign markets and was less prone than its European rivals to abuse economic influence for political ends. Though highly critical of the Kaiser and his numerous diplomatic gaffes, Wolters seemed to embrace his imperialist agenda. Germany's expansionism, as he saw it, was aimed at defending her economic interests, not at precipitating military conflict: "Daß zwischen diesem Ausdehnungswillen [in the economic sphere] dieser Rüstungskraft und dieser — ich bin geneigt zu sagen — illusionären Friedensseeligkeit ein gefährlicher Abgrund klaffte, sah außer dem Seherdichter [i.e., Stefan George] kaum einer in voller Deutlichkeit, und vielleicht war dieses Nichtsehen unsere tiefste aber uns allein angehende Schuld."[73] The issue of war guilt was central to Wolters's assessment of the Versailles Treaty, because the extent of the reparations demanded by the Entente powers was proportionate to the extent of German culpability. The question was whether the German Reich was to pay only for the damages inflicted on Belgium, or for all damages caused in the Great War, including human

casualties. Wolters highlighted the vast quantitative differences resulting from different assessments of German guilt. He concluded his speech by demanding full sovereignty for Germany, including the right to rearmament.

The Kiel speech, written one year before his death, is indicative of Wolters's tendency in the 1920s to prioritize topical political debates over his academic research. As has been indicated above, George was, by and large, critical of Wolters's often polemical interventions in these debates. He evidently favored a more oblique approach and wanted his disciple to make an impact as a scholar. That Wolters largely failed to do. In contrast to Salin, he did not bring about any major innovations in the field of economics. Methodologically, he remained indebted to the younger Historical School, in particular its main exponent, Gustav Schmoller. The topics that Wolters chose to write on as an economic historian nonetheless reflect specifically Georgean preoccupations: the lasting influence of ancient Greek philosophy on modern thought; the role of the great man, the hero, and the visionary; and, most importantly perhaps, the interplay of rulership (*Herrschaft*) and service (*Dienst*) as structuring principles in the social, economic, and political sphere. In that sense, at least, Wolters's scholarly work represents a bridge between George and the field of economics.

Arthur Salz: Conflicting Allegiances

Though his publications in the field of macroeconomics (*Volkswirtschaftslehre*) were significant, the economist and sociologist Arthur Salz (1881–1963) is less well-known in the profession today than, say, Edgar Salin or Kurt Singer. A personal friend of Stefan George, Salz belonged mainly to the Heidelberger Kreis around Gundolf. His position within the Circle was relatively marginal, however. As Carola Groppe has shown, there was considerable divergence and, indeed, distance both within and between the various subgroups that made up the George Kreis.[74] His strong attachment to Gundolf, whom he had met during his student years in Heidelberg, and to George notwithstanding, Salz seems to have identified with his Bohemian homeland and with Judaism rather than with the Circle. As an economist, he was mostly indebted to the Austrian School and to the German Historical School.

Salz was born in the Bohemian town of Staab (now Stod) on 31 December 1881 and died in Worthington, Ohio, on 10 August 1963. The son of a well-to-do Jewish family, he attended the Gymnasium in Pilsen, and in 1900 enrolled as a student of *Volkswirtschaftslehre* at the University of Berlin, where he was much influenced by the lectures of Georg Simmel, who had been an acquaintance — and an admirer — of George since the late 1890s.[75] It was an essay by Simmel that drew his attention to George.

In 1903, Salz completed a PhD dissertation entitled *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kritik der Lohnfondstheorie* under the direction of the eminent German economist and social reformer Lujo Brentano (1844–1931) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. Brentano, a founding member of theVerein für Socialpolitik, was a reform-minded, left-liberal (*Kathedersozialist*) and a major representative of the younger Historical School. After obtaining his doctorate, Salz returned to Staab for a while, where he directed his father's company. In 1909, after further post-doctoral research in Vienna and Prague, he submitted his *Habilitationsschrift* on *Wallenstein als Merkantilist*, which had been supervised by Alfred Weber, whom Salz had followed from Prague to Heidelberg. It was in Heidelberg that Salz obtained his first senior academic position, an associate professorship (*außerordentliche Professur*) in *Volkswirtschaftslehre* in 1924.[76] In Heidelberg he also became acquainted with Max Weber, in whose house he was a frequent guest.[77] Significantly, he adopted a middling position in the controversy over the meaning of *Wissenschaft* that raged between *Georgeaner* and *Weberianer* since 1910. Salz's book *Für die Wissenschaft. Gegen die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1921) was an attempt to qualify the radically anti-Weberian, antiscientific polemic that Erich Kahler, an associate of the Circle, had launched in his pamphlet *Der Beruf der Wissenschaft* of 1920.[78]

That Salz never found a tenured professorship at a German university surely had to do with the fact that in May 1919, he had become involved in the events surrounding the collapse of the Munich Soviet Republic, headed by the Communist Eugen Leviné, who was a personal friend. After the Soviet Republic had been put down by Freikorps and remnants of the regular army, among them Salz's brother-in-law Ernst Kantorowicz, on 2 May, Salz hid Leviné in his house and, after the latter's discovery, was accused of high treason. Though it was clear that he did not share Leviné's political views, Salz only narrowly escaped the death penalty, thanks largely to the intervention of Alfred Weber. Stigmatized as a Communist sympathizer, his academic career in the Weimar Republic plateaued and he remained in his untenured position at Heidelberg. In the wake of the Nazi take-over in January 1933, he quickly emigrated, first to England, where he served as a visiting professor at Cambridge University for a while, before moving on to the United States in 1934. From 1934 through his retirement in 1952, he taught economics at Ohio State University, first as a visiting professor (from 1934 to 1937), then as a full professor. He never returned to Germany.

Salz's friendship with Gundolf was deep, lasting, and entirely reciprocal.[79] Gundolf dedicated his magnum opus *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* to Salz "in herzlicher Freundschaft,"[80] and Salz dedicated his *Das Wesen des Imperialismus* (1931) to Gundolf. Gundolf paved the way for Salz's first meeting with George in 1902, while Salz encouraged Gundolf

to carry out his habilitation in Heidelberg, which it was hoped would further the cultural goals of the Circle.[81] Even after George's break with Gundolf, Salz stuck to this friend, which led to a noticeable cooling of his relations with George. In 1912, Salz had married Elisabeth ("Soscha") Kantorowicz, the sister of the historian Ernst Kantorowicz, whom Salz introduced to George. He remained attached to the Circle in a number of ways, and his early works deal with topics that were of interest to George, notably Max Weber's notion of value-neutrality (*Werturteilsfreiheit*) in science and the question of how best to educate and train young scholars.[82] George's esteem of Salz is evidenced by the fact that he gave the young economist one of only ten preprint copies of *Der Stern des Bundes* in 1913.[83] The *Zeittafel* marks frequent encounters between Salz and the Master, and after the latter's split with Gundolf, Salz sought to maintain contact to the Circle.[84] In a letter of June 1926, he even offered to act as a mediator between George and Gundolf — without success, however.[85] Like Gundolf himself, Salz continued to hold George in high regard after the separation and all the acrimony that went along with it.

Salz probably identified more strongly with his Jewish heritage than most of the other Jewish members of the Circle,[86] though he seems to have shared some of their ambivalent feelings towards this heritage. In her essay on "Die Bedeutung des Stefan George-Kreises für die deutsch-jüdische Geistesgeschichte," Wera Lewin summarizes this ambivalence by quoting the following lines from Lessing's play *Nathan der Weise*:[87]

> So ganz Stockjude sein zu wollen geht schon nicht
> und ganz und gar nicht Jude geht noch minder

According to Johannes Fried, Salz's deep attachment to Judaism was the main reason why his relation to George lacked the kind of arduous, unconditional devotion that tied many other disciples, Jewish and Gentile, to the Master.[88]

Salz's first major work in the field of macroeconomics was the published version of his doctoral dissertation on the Wage-Fund Doctrine, that is, the economic theory, famously formulated in J. S. Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), that at any given moment workers' wages are determined by the ratio of capital to the population of available workers. Inspired, in part, by his teacher Brentano, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kritik der Lohnfondstheorie* appeared in 1905 in the series *Münchener volkswirtschaftliche Studien*, which was coedited by Brentano.[89] Although its argumentation seems muddled at times, Salz's book provides an astute survey of the evolution of the Wage-Fund Doctrine and the neoclassical theory of the labor market more generally, focusing on the Austrian variant of neoclassical economics as represented by the economic theorist Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk (1851–1914). According to Salz, Böhm-

Bawerk's notion of a subsistence fund signifies a return to the Wage-Fund Doctrine. Against this notion, Salz advances to arguments that have since been taken up and developed by a number of scholars in the field of macroeconomics. His first argument against Böhm-Bawerk is that the latter wrongly considers the subsistence fund as a given magnitude when in fact it has to be measured in terms of prices, which in turn depend on the wage rate. As he puts it: "Für gewöhnlich hilft sich Böhm-Bawerk damit, daß er den Subsistenzfonds einer Geldsumme gleichsetzt. Geht das an? . . . Ist die Wertschätzung in Geld nicht selbst wieder abhängig von Eigenwerten (Gebrauchswerten) aller Güter . . .?"[90] This consideration marks the first step towards a modern critique of the neoclassical theory of capital. The second argument is directed against the assumption of full employment in neoclassical theory, which he ridicules in the following way:

> Wo also aus irgendeinem Grunde zu viele Arbeiter vorhanden sind, da braucht nur die Produktionsperiode entsprechend verkürzt zu werden und alles Übel hat ein Ende. Das hätten sich Malthus und seine Nachfolger bei der Behandlung der Lohnfrage merken sollen und alles Gerede über zu großes Arbeitsangebot wäre überflüssig gewesen. Andererseits waren auch jene Verhältnisse zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts in England [i.e., the Luddite movement] nicht nötig. Um den Hunger der Arbeiter zu stillen, hätten die Unternehmer die Produktionsperiode einfach zu verkürzen brauchen, mit anderen Worten, sie hätten die Arbeiter ruhig die Maschinen zerstören lassen sollen, und die Löhne wären sofort zur gewünschten Höhe emporgeschnellt.[91]

Radical though it seems, Salz's critique of the neoclassical theory of labor does not translate into a fundamentally new doctrine. The young *Volkswirtschaftler* frequently qualifies his theses and lets the reader draw his own conclusions.

In his 1906 review of Salz's book, Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950), soon to emerge as one of the most important economic theorists on the European continent, acknowledged the author's achievement — "Als dogmengeschichtliche Arbeit ist die vorliegende Schrift tüchtig und dankenswert" —, while observing that his critique of Böhm-Bawerk rested on a flawed understanding of the latter's theories.[92] What further weakened Salz's arguments was his failure to relate the theoretical to the historical aspects of his study. Similar weaknesses are discernible in his later publications — for instance, the 1925 essay "Kapital, Kapitalformen, Kapitalbildung, Kapitaldynamik," which examined capital formation and introduced sociological types to compare different forms of saving, or his "Grundsätze einer Theorie vom Arbeitslohn" (1928), which returned to the problem of wages and offered a more thorough formulation of the marginal productivity theory.[93]

As has been suggested above, Salin also ventured into the field of economic history. His study *Wallenstein als Merkantilist*, published in the *Mitteilungen des Vereines für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* in 1909, portrays Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583–1634), the great military commander of the Thirty Years War, as an ambitious ruler and an efficient businessman. Anxious to strengthen his hold over the fiefdoms he had recently been awarded, Wallenstein used all resources available to gain economic autarky in his territories, anticipating the policies later proposed by the mercantilists.[94]

Salz's strong identification with Judaism is illustrated by his contribution to the collective volume *Vom Judentum* (1913), which also included essays by Karl Wolfskehl, Martin Buber, Kurt Singer, Erich Kahler, Arnold Zweig, and Max Brod. The title of Salz's contribution, "Ver sacrum,"[95] alluded to an ancient religious practice recorded by Roman historians such as Livy and Strabo, according to which a community, in times of crisis, sent off a certain number of youths (the *sacrani*) to found their own settlement. Readers familiar with George's verse also would have noticed the reference to the poem "Der Auszug der Erstlinge" from *Das Buch der Hirten- und Preisgedichte*. Salz proclaimed such a sacred *Auszug* or exodus for his own generation of Jewish youth: "Wir, die heute jung sind, fühlen in uns von neuem die uralte, drängende, heilige Frühlingsnot; wir fühlen, daß in den Räumen der alten bequemen Welt für uns kein Platz mehr ist, daß wir hinaus müssen über die väterlichen Grenzen . . . auf die Suche nach einer neuen geistigen Heimat."[96] The feeling of discontent and the search for a new spiritual homeland, of course, affected large segments of Germany's bourgeois youth at the beginning of the twentieth century, but Salz argued that these sentiments were particularly resonant amongst young Jews:

> Hinaus aus dem geistigen und sittlichen Ghetto, in das wir eingepfercht sind, hinaus aus der schimpflichsten aller Sklavereien, aus der freiwilligen! . . . Bahne dir, Gesalbter des Herrn, einen Weg und verschmähe es unterzukriechen in den Hütten der geistig Armen, den Gehäusen der Nützlichkeit und Bequemlichkeit . . . Erfülle deine bürgerlichen Pflichten als deine Selbstverständlichkeiten . . . und bewahre dir vor allem deine Demut vor dem, der dich und deine Väter geführt bis zu diesem Tage. Dann aber . . . werden wir . . . ein Reich in uns aufrichten *in* diesem Leben und doch nicht von dieser Welt und es begrüßen als ein Ziel, das zu erreichen wir ausgezogen . . . Lasset uns, Freunde, unser Schicksal, unsere "Frage" unter diesem Aspekt erleben![97]

The *Reich* that Salz projected here as the fulfillment of Jewish hopes and the redemptive solution to the Jewish "question" was an internal, spiritual realm, though his words at times suggest the influence of Zionist ideas.[98]

These reflections on the Jewish question seem to stand in contradiction to the nationalist turn that Salz, like other members of the Circle, took in the aftermath of the First World War. His pamphlet *Das ewige Frankreich* (1923) illustrates some of Salz's new patriotic preoccupations. Ostensibly a survey of French economic history from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, it is forceful critique of the French reparation demands at Versailles.[99] According to Salz, these demands are the result of a long-standing tendency in the French economy to compensate for failures in the private sector by dint of centralization, a policy, he argues, that accounts both for the rapid increase in public debt and a growing class of rentiers. Imperialism seems to point a way out of this impasse, and Salz interprets French foreign policy during and after the Great War as a kind of intra-European imperialism. Echoing Wolters, the otherwise conciliatory economist strikes a surprisingly chauvinistic note when he decries the Treaty of Versailles as a form of international blackmail.

Salz admired Marx, but was strongly opposed to Bolshevism. As he remarked in a 1919 essay for the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*: "Uns Deutsche könnte es ja mit einigem Stolz erfüllen, daß die Revolution, obwohl sie in Rußland zur Tat gereift ist, geistig deutsches Produkt ist, daß alle ihre geistigen Fäden in deutscher Geistesarbeit und zwar bester bürgerlicher Arbeit zusammenlaufen. Indeß vergällt einem der Marxismus die Freude an Marx."[100] The literature of Bolshevism, in particular the writings of Lenin, according to Salz, was flawed by its lack of Geist, its unrelenting materialism, and its antimetaphysical thrust.[101] For Germany in particular, the rise of Bolshevism signified an almost existential threat, though it was not the only one: "Uns Deutschen ist die Stellungnahme zum Bolschewismus . . . ungeheuer erschwert, . . . in die Mitte gestellt zwischen zwei gleich starke Vernichtungswillen haben wir nur zu wählen, ob wir lieber vom Osten oder vom Westen erschlagen sein wollen." Soviet Russia, for Salz, was a dictatorial regime: its centralized economy necessitated an authoritarian bureaucracy that employed all possible means to discipline the working class and increase its productivity; but the capitalist West was a no less destructive force. Caught between these two extreme forms of materialism, Germany's mission was to preserve and foster spiritual and cultural values.

These earlier writings form the backdrop to Salz's two major works, *Macht und Wirtschaftsgesetz: Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis des Wesens der kapitalistischen Wirtschaftsverfassung* (1930) and *Das Wesen des Imperialismus: Umrisse einer Theorie* (1931). The former was dedicated to Alfred Weber, the latter to Friedrich Gundolf, and the dedications reflect Salz's dual allegiances as a political economist in Heidelberg. That Salz was able to preserve a Georgean perspective in his scholarship doubtless had to do with the fact that as an extraordinary professor, he was not fully integrated into the academic establishment.[102] In *Macht und Wirtschaftsgesetz*,

Salz examines the relations between state power and economics as the principal question of political economy. This question, which had already been investigated by Böhm-Bawerk,[103] had particular resonance in Europe, where the extent to which economic conditions could and should be shaped by governmental intervention was considerably more controversial than in the United States.

Salz focused on the process of wage formation as a central area in which such intervention came to the fore, but also considered the more general question as to how, in the age of advanced capitalism, power operated no longer just in the political, but also in and through the economic sphere. "Kein Zweifel nun," he observed, "daß die heutigen privaten Wirtschaftsgebilde des Kapitalismus mit einer größeren potentiellen Wirtschaftsmacht geladen sind, als die großen Machtträger der Vergangenheit sie je besessen haben."[104] Salz believed that the full extent of economic power had not been appreciated yet by philosophers and historians, notably Jacob Burckhardt, whose theory of the three forces (state, religion, culture) famously ignored the economic sphere. This power brought with it considerable risks, for the economic sphere — though subject to certain laws — was largely determined, Salz maintained, by irrational factors. Like most German economists since the days of Friedrich List (1789–1846), Salz was doubtful that markets could generate the necessary stability for their own proper functioning.

In his second major work, *Das Wesen des Kapitalismus*, published the following year, Salz considered the interplay of economic development and political power on the international level. Imperialism, he argued, was not an effect of capitalism, as Lenin and other theorists had claimed; it was a much older phenomenon. Following Schumpeter, Salz pointed out that it originated in nationalist traditions that predated capitalism or that were not the result, at any rate, of the capitalists' demand for new export markets.[105] Rather than seeing it as the root cause of imperialism, he considered the expansion of capitalism — what we would now call globalization — a potential solution to imperial conflict, imagining a future world economy in which rivaling states would be bound together by commercial ties.

Though they do not present any grand theoretical syntheses, Salz's two books contain numerous astute insights as well as visionary prospects. They are also testimony to the fact that later in his career he developed a more moderate, cosmopolitan, and optimistic outlook on economic development. There are also important continuities, however, with his earlier work and these serve to highlight Salz's continuing indebtedness, in his work as an economist, to the ideas of George. Notably, Salz's holistic conception of *Nationalökonomie*, his interdisciplinary approach, combining macroeconomics, economic theory, and economic history, and his interest in the links between economic developments on the one hand and cultural

as well as spiritual developments on the other reveal the influence of the Circle. Like Salin, Salz considered *Nationalökonomie* as a *Geistes-* or *Kulturwissenschaft*, insisting that economic systems, too, manifested "das Leben des Geistes . . . und . . . die geistige Struktur einer Epoche."[106] Because its object was *geistig*, political economy had to be a spiritual, and that meant at least in part an artistic, undertaking: "Wesen, Gesetz und Sinn des Kapitalismus enthüllen sich nur dem unverdrossenen kritischen Geiste des Forschers oder werden uns vielleicht einmal, wenn diese ganze Epoche mythisch geworden sein wird, kund im dichterischen Gebilde."[107] The economist's task was not to dissect the economic system by dint of "zerfasernde Analyse," but to recreate it in its totality through *Anschauung*. Ten years before Wolters's seminal essay, Salz formulated a version of the *Gestalt* theory in a letter to Gundolf: "Alles was gut, schön u. edel ist müssen wir begreifen (nicht analysieren) können, d.h. es muss auf uns wirken [. . .] Nie werden wir ergründen und ermessen wollen, welche Kräfte da ihr Spiel treiben, bis dass die Gestalt vor uns tritt . . ."[108] He also believed that *Nationalökonomie*, just as any other branch of *Wissenschaft*, ultimately had to serve a higher end, the vital interests of the individual as well as the collective: it had to be "Dienerin am Leben und den höchsten Interessen der Gesellschaft."[109] In addition to these methodological similarities,[110] there were other important substantive parallels. Salz's critique of materialism, his wariness of an unbound market economy, and last but not least, his sensitivity to the irrational factors at work in the economic sphere are all indicative of his Georgean background. More than that of Wolters, Salz's work as a *Nationalökonom* reflects specifically Georgean concerns.

Kurt Singer: The "Mystical Economist from Hamburg"

In a short commemorative essay on Albert Einstein, John Maynard Keynes recalled some of his acquaintances in interwar Germany: Einstein "was the nicest, and the only talented person I saw in all Berlin, except perhaps old Fuerstenberg, the banker whom Lydia liked so much, and Kurt Singer, two foot by five, the mystical economist from Hamburg. And he was a Jew; and so was Fuerstenberg and so was Singer. And my dear Melchior is a Jew, too. Yet, if I lived there, I felt I might turn anti-Semite. For the poor Prussian is too slow and heavy on his legs for the other kind of Jews."[111] Though he frequently corresponded with Singer, Keynes seems to have met him only once. Yet he was deeply impressed not just by Singer's personality, but also by his scholarship, and he requested that Singer translate several of his articles into German.

Kurt Singer was born on 18 May 1886 in Magdeburg and died on 14 February 1962 in Athens. His father was a Jewish businessman. After

graduating from the Gymnasium in Magdeburg, he studied in Berlin, Geneva, Freiburg and, finally, Strasbourg, where he worked on monetary theory under the direction of Georg Friedrich Knapp (1842–1926), the founder of modern chartalism. Singer taught at the University of Hamburg from 1912 to 1929, eventually obtaining an associate professorship. He combined his academic work with a distinguished career as a financial journalist and editor of the influential *Wirtschaftsdienst*. Singer's doctoral dissertation concentrated on monetary reform in India. Subsequent works dealt with Knapp's monetary theory, but he also published two books on Plato and, perhaps inspired by his lifelong friend Martin Buber, occasionally wrote on Judaism. In 1933, he took up a visiting professorship at the Imperial University in Tokyo. An avid student of Japanese philosophy and art, he discovered fascinating parallels between the Japanese and ancient Greek culture. When Japan adopted the antisemitic policies of its ally Germany, Singer lost his university position in Tokyo and moved to Sendai in the north of Japan, where he taught German and ancient languages. There he made the acquaintance of another German-Jewish émigré, Karl Löwith. In 1939, he was forced to continue his odyssey and emigrated to Australia. Interned for several years as a potential enemy alien, Singer used his captivity to study Chinese and mathematics. In 1944, he was released and given a grant to write his book *The Idea of Conflict*. Meanwhile, he had taken up a modest academic position at the University of Sydney, where he taught the history of economic thought. As of 1957, the government of the Federal Republic of Germany paid him a pension as a form of compensation (*Wiedergutmachung*) for the losses he had sustained during the Third Reich. Singer spent the last years of his life in Athens. His posthumous book on Japan, *Mirror, Sword and Jewel* (1973) was very well-received — an expert in the field describing it as a "superlative work (the best book on Japan I have ever read)."[112]

In addition to a moving account of his encounter with George, Singer wrote a number of essays on George, including two on George and Hofmannsthal.[113] While in Australia, Singer accidentally met an associate of the Circle, Hans Brasch. The poems he composed with Brasch have been published by the Stefan George-Stiftung. Brasch's 1943 dialogue "Die Verstreuten" details their attempts to account for the various disciples, who had already been dispersed throughout the world.[114] In Brasch's dialogue, the two friends recall the caesura of 1933: George refusing the honors the dignitaries of the newly established Third Reich tried to bestow on him; Robert Boehringer preventing a republication of George's works by the National Socialists; Ernst Morwitz remaining in Berlin to help others in their attempts to leave Germany before emigrating himself; and Wolfskehl's loneliness in New Zealand. Brasch's text concludes:

> Was aber wurde aus denen die in Deutschland geblieben sind? Sind nicht *sie* die wirklich Verschollenen . . . sie alle waren nicht roh genug für die neue Lebensweise, und wenn sich einst die Nacht über der alten Welt lichtet, und sie noch am Leben sind, werden sie zermürbter sein als wir, die wir auf den Mauern des kaiserlichen Peking, unter den Kuppeln von Cairo, ja in den eintönigen Vororten Victorias und Carolinas gelernt haben zu warten und nicht verlernt haben, die Wahrheit zu sprechen.[115]

As for Singer's work in the field of economics, his early research on monetary theory remained largely indebted to the statist theories of Knapp, which conceived of money as a government-issued token (fiat money) that had no intrinsic value. His high regard for Knapp is evidenced by the introduction he wrote to the edition of Knapp's correspondence with the political economist Friedrich Bendixen, in which he put Knapp's 1905 magnum opus *Staatliche Theorie des Geldes* on a par with Einstein's theory of relativity and Freud's discovery of the unconscious. This was an exaggeration, no doubt, but Knapp's theories were important insofar as they paved the way for Keynes's notion of deficit spending. The other major influence on Singer's work as an economist was Georg Simmel. Singer's reliance on Simmel was doubtless facilitated by the latter's admiration for George, but ultimately it rested on a shared belief in the state's central role in the organization and control of monetary exchange.

Singer came to the Circle relatively late in his life. He was already thirty years old when, introduced by Ernst Robert Curtius, he met George in Heidelberg in 1916. He had been reading (and admiring) George's poetry for some time at this point, though, and after reading *Der Stern des Bundes* in 1914, he had already resolved to contribute to the building of George's "state."[116] His 1927 study of Plato, *Platon, der Gründer*, was directly inspired by his association with George and the Circle.[117] Three years earlier, Wolters had already taken note of Singer's book *Staat und Wirtschaft seit dem Waffenstillstand* (1924), which, he remarked in a letter, provided "ein erschütterndes bild unserer friedenskatastrophe in den fünf letzten jahren."[118] Wolters was so impressed by Singer's assessment of Germany's postwar economic crisis that he suggested it be published in the Circle's "in-house" series *Werke der Schau und Forschung aus dem Kreise der Blätter für die Kunst*, but this never materialized. Singer's book consists of fifty essays, written over a span of five years while working for the *Wirtschaftsdienst* in Hamburg. They combine a bleak analysis of the disastrous effects the Treaty of Versailles had on the German economy with almost lyrical expressions of hope for future redemption: "Nichts anderes kann unsere Welt zwischen Untergang und Aufgang retten, als das Aufspringen einer verborgenen Quelle, in der die Wasser eines neuen Lebens aus unlotbaren Tiefen sich sammeln und zum Strome werden, der

die Bilder neuer Erde und neuen Himmels auf seinen Wellen trägt. Bis dahin werden noch viele schwere und nächtige Wege zu gehen sein."[119] The essay "Sozialismus ohne Glaube und . . . Liberalismus ohne Weite," originally published on 24 October 1919, critically surveys the economic implications of Germany's new republican constitution. It also contains a remarkable portrait of Max Weber, which illustrates the Circle's ambivalent attitude towards Weber's diagnosis of modernity: "Er war viel zu tief, um nicht die Verkümmerung zu sehen, die in dem ungehemmten Fortschreiten der Rationalisierung für Welt und Mensch beschlossen liegt. Aber es war sein Glaube, daß dies das Joch der Notwendigkeit sei."[120] For the members of the Circle, of course, the modern predicament could — and had to be — overcome. They did not share Weber's resigned realism and challenged his critique of their *Erlösungsreligion* as neo-Romantic utopianism. According to Singer, Weber's failure to appreciate the Circle's promise of redemption and cultural renewal called into question his ability to diagnose modernity: "Jenseits des Zeitgeists sah er nicht viel mehr als Romantik und Utopie."[121]

Towards the end of his book, Singer offered a summary evaluation of the state of culture in the "age of progress" that included a lengthy quotation from the 1910 volume of the Blätter für die Kunst:

> Wenn wir heute aus den verschiedensten geistigen Kreisen Vorschläge vernehmen, wie eine Bildungseinheit (Kultur) zu erzeugen oder zu erhöhen sei, so ist daran das Bemerkenswerte, daß man von der gepriesenen Herrschaft des Fortschritts (die man später vielleicht weniger milde die des Raubbaus nennen wird) die Erfüllung zu erwarten aufhört und daß überall die Angst durchklingt, als ob in dieser bestgeordneten aller Welten ein Wesentliches nicht versorgt sei und ein Edelstes verloren gehe.

Singer concluded:

> Die Wechselverkettung der Interessen, Gesinnung und Verstand, Energie und Wachheit mögen im Innern wie im Zwischenstaatlichen hinreichen, das Sterben ganzer Bevölkerungen zu verhüten. Vor dem Absinken menschlichen Daseins in das Niedrige, Kleintierhafte, Gestalt- und Würdelose bewahrt nur Hauch aus anderer Welt und Glut von zeitfremdem Herde. Dies ist uns die klare Lehre der fünf verworren-grauen Jahre nach dem Waffenstillstand.[122]

But even these last words alluded to George's poem "Ihr tratet zu dem herde" from *Das Jahr der Seele* (1897), whose first stanza reads:

> Ihr tratet zu dem herde
> Wo alle glut verstarb •
> Licht war nur an der erde
> Vom monde leichenfarb.[123]

The second edition of *The Idea of Conflict* contains two essays that shed some light on his peculiar approach to political economy. The first is a critique of the British proponents of free-market economics, in particular Lionel Robbins (1898–1984).[124] Robbins had sought to construct an economic policy on the basis of laissez-faire or classical economic theory. Singer sought to deconstruct it, notably the belief in the spontaneous and self-regulating functioning of the market, which, he argued, could never serve as a foundation for economic *policy*: "Der Gedanke . . ., die Wirtschaft als Ganzes sei der Gegenstand bewußter Ordnung und Gestaltung durch den Staatsmann, ist Smith wie Ricardo lebensfremd."[125] In Singer's eyes, the state had to do more than issue rules and regulations for the market; its task was to give shape ("gestalten") to the economy as a whole. Once economic theorists came around to this realization, they would appreciate the superiority of the statist doctrines put forth by Knapp and others: "diese Wendung aber bedeutet den Sieg Schmollers, Knapps und von Gottl-Ottlilienfelds im Kernpunkt ihres Denkens."[126]

The other essay, entitled "Über Wesen und Stand der Nationalökonomie," draws heavily on Werner Sombart's seminal work *Die drei Nationalökonomien* of 1930.[127] Singer credits Sombart with overcoming the *Methodenstreit*, that is, the controversy over the appropriate methodological and epistemological orientation of economics, which raged in German-speaking Central Europe in the late 1880s and early 1890s between the supporters of the Austrian School, led by Carl Menger, and the supporters of the German Historical School, led by Gustav Schmoller. According to Singer, the *Methodenstreit* came to a conclusion "als Schmoller . . . zugestand, daß er die klassische Freihandelsdoktrin zuwenig beachtet habe, und als Wicksell . . . seinen letzten Schülern nichts dringlicher einzuschärfen wußte als . . . studiert Geschichte . . ., die Empirie." It was Sombart, Singer maintained, who achieved this synthesis of theoretical and empirical orientation by dint of a "fast romantisch anmutende Verbindung von Verstandeswillen und Anschauungsfreude."[128] The result was *verstehende Nationalökonomie*, that is, a more empathetic, historically grounded, but nonetheless scientifically rigorous, approach that took account of the changing motives of economic subjects and thus did justice to the diversity of economic phenomena.

Singer then tackled the question as to whether this brand of *verstehende Nationalökonomie* could be value-free — as Sombart, following Weber, had claimed — insisting that "Verstehen muß sich nach Kräften von allen blutsmäßigen, umweltlichen und weltanschaulichen Hörigkeiten befreien."[129] Singer was deeply skeptical about this claim. Like most associates of the Circle, he questioned Weber's notion of a *werturteilsfreie Wissenschaft*. To postulate an analogy between economics and the natural sciences, in his eyes, was misleading. It was erroneous, he argued, to approach "das zu Verstehende als ein Vorhandenes . . ., das von jedermann verstanden, wie

dort von jedermann gemessen werden kann." The same held true for history: "Die Geschichte ist überhaupt nicht in dem Sinn wie die Natur, sondern lebt, und es unterscheidet nicht nur die Menschen und Zeiten, was ihnen zum Problem wird, sondern ob sie dank ihrem So-sein befähigt und berechtigt sind, das auch nur zu gewahren, was in der Geschichte vorgeht."[130] Invoking Heidegger, Singer emphasized the inherently time-bound and value-laden nature of language as an insurmountable obstacle to the practice of a value-free science:

> Wer etwa aus Scheu, sich einer Wertung schuldig zu machen, von Helden nur in Anführungsstrichen schreibt, von Christus und einem Revolutionsliteraten in gleichem Tone und in den gleichen Begriffen redet und den Propheten, wenn auch nur für die Zwecke kausaler, aber das heißt doch verstehender Zuordnung auf einen Sonderfall des Demagogen zurückführt, der verfehlt nicht nur den Sinn selber, den er verstehen zu wollen vorgibt, sondern verkehrt diesen Sinn: Die Wertgebundenheit der Sprache ist so fundamental, daß jeder Versuch, ihr zu entgehen, zum Ausdruck der gegnerischen Wertung wird.[131]

Economic phenomena, consequently, could not be studied in isolation, only in their changing political, social, and intellectual contexts. Singer was adamant that economics be considered a proper academic discipline, and that it be pursued with analytical rigor and scholarly sobriety. At the same time, he maintained that the economic sphere was not governed by rational behavior, nor was it determined by rational laws that could be rationally discerned.

Conclusion

This survey, as has been indicated above, is far from exhaustive. There were other economists around George, notably Elisabeth Salomon, Wilhelm Andreae, and Julius Landmann. They, too, considered *Nationalökonomie* or political economy an integral part of the humanities or *Geisteswissenschaften*. Just how "untimely" this conception was becomes more readily apparent when one recalls that the first three decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of *Nationalökonomie* and *Volkswirtschaftslehre* as decidedly more empirical disciplines. In contrast to the majority of their academic peers and in explicit contradistinction to neoclassical doctrine, Edgar Salin, Friedrich Wolters, Arthur Salz, and Kurt Singer held that the essential phenomena of economics could not be grasped by analyzing the actions of utility-maximizing consumers and profit-maximizing entrepreneurs. Their rejection of neoclassical theory was influenced by the Historical School, no doubt, but it was also shaped by George. It was George who taught them to be wary of empirical

rationality, materialism, and the idea of progress. And it was George who reminded them that science could never be an end in itself: it had to serve life. The purpose of scholarship was not to accumulate data or to increase knowledge, but to strengthen, to enhance *Lebensgefühl*, and to inspire creative action. In the words of Gundolf:

> So wenig wie die Natur und die Gegenwart ist die Geschichte nur zum Schauen und Hinnehmen da, sondern vor allem zum wählerischen Umschaffen und wie dem aktuellen Heut gegenüber scheiden sich vor dem Gestern die Geister in solche denen es Stoff und solche denen es Kraft wird. Jene kennen eigentlich keinen Unterschied zwischen Totem und Lebendigem: sie wollen erkennen und benutzen . . . Alles ist erforschbar . . . Der anderen Geistesart . . . gilt nur was fruchtbar macht, Kräfte weckt, das Lebensgefühl steigert. Was dazu nicht dient, das ist ihr Tod, bloße Vergangenheit, Schutt, bestenfalls Dung oder Mörtel.[132]

Just like history, the economic world was shaped by *Täter*, great, creative personalities like Colbert or Wallenstein, whose motivations ultimately eluded rational explanation. And, just like history, the economic world was determined by a myriad of frequently interdependent political, social, cultural, and intellectual factors. That was the reason why all the economists considered here favored a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, or holistic approach to the object of their studies. In contrast to what they considered the fateful specialization of research and the "dissecting," analytical approach practiced by their colleagues, they demanded *Gesamterkenntnis*.

Their belief in the active, subjective, and creative involvement of the researcher in the process of research came from George. The ability to grasp the spiritual or *geistig* essence of an economic system or institution required particular talents, creative powers that were not available to everyone. Creative or intuitive vision (*Anschauung* or *Schau*) was a special gift that enabled the observer not just to understand the motives of a historical agent or the defining features of an epoch, but to re-create them in a vivid, plastic (*anschaulich*) manner. Perhaps the best introduction to the Georgean method (the term "method" suggests a level of reflexivity and systematicity that is misleading) is Edith Landmann's *Transcendenz des Erkennens*. This "method" inspired some of the most exciting intellectual biographies produced in the first half of the twentieth century. Traces of it can be discerned in the philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer, who openly acknowledged his indebtedness to the George Circle and who, in a private conversation with me shortly before his death, confessed that he was particularly influenced by Wolters, with whom he was close, eighty years earlier, in Marburg. As I have argued in this essay, this method also informed the forays into political economy and economic history undertaken by

Salin, Wolters, Salz, and Singer. The works of the economists around George are unorthodox, at times frustratingly idiosyncratic, but almost always original, and frequently brilliant. Few, if any, of them are known to English-speaking readers, both professional and amateur. They await to be rediscovered.

Notes

[1] An earlier version of this essay was presented at the conference "In Search of the Secret Germany: Stefan George, his Circle, and the Weimar Republic," held at Cambridge University in March 2002. A great deal has been published on my topic since then, notably *Wissenschaftler im George-Kreis: Die Welt des Dichters und der Beruf der Wissenschaft*, ed. Bernhard Böschenstein, Jürgen Egyptien, Bertram Schefold and Wolfgang Graf Vitzthum (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); and Korinna Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen: Theorie und Politik der Ökonomen im Stefan George Kreis* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009). The principal study on the Secret Germany is now Manfred Riedel, *Geheimes Deutschland: Stefan George und die Brüder Stauffenberg* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006). See also Bruno Pieger and Bertram Schefold, eds., *Stefan George: Dichtung, Ethos, Staat* (Berlin: Verlag Berlin-Brandenburg, 2010). I have revised my essay to take account of some of these developments.

[2] See Klaus Landfried, *Stefan George: Politik des Unpolitischen* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1975); and Michael Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer? Zur Wirkung Stefan Georges im "Dritten Reich"* (Marburg: Tectum, 1995).

[3] See Edith Weiller, *Max Weber und die literarische Moderne* (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1994), 77.

[4] Georg Peter Landmann, ed., *Stefan George in fremden Sprachen: Übersetzungen seiner Gedichte in die europäischen Sprachen außer den slawischen* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1973), 749. The concept of the good life was central to the Circle: see Roman Köster, Werner Plumpe, Bertram Schefold, and Korinna Schönhärl, eds., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens und die Wirklichkeit der Weimarer Republik: Vorstellungen von Staat und Gemeinschaft im George-Kreis* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009).

[5] Edgar Salin, *Vom deutschen Verhängnis: Gespräch an der Zeitenwende; Burckhardt-Nietzsche* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1959).

[6] On Salin's interdisciplinary approach, see, e.g., Harry W. Zimmerman, *Zur Ökonomik und Technik der Atomzeit* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1957); on his increasing isolation in academe, see Erwin von Beckerath, ed., *Antidoron: Edgar Salin zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1962).

[7] Bertram Schefold, "Der Nachklang der historischen Schule in Deutschland zwischen dem Ende des zweiten Weltkriegs und dem Anfang der sechziger Jahre," in *Erkenntnisgewinne, Erkenntnisverluste: Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in*

den Wirtschafts-, Rechts- und Sozialwissenschaften zwischen den 20er und 50er Jahren, ed. Karl Acham, Knut Wolfgang Nörr, and Bertram Schefold (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998), 31–70.

[8] Gottfried Bombach and René L. Frey, *Symposion in memoriam Edgar Salin* (Basel: Kyklos, 1975).

[9] See Edgar Salin, "Der wissenschaftliche Kreis um Stefan George. Vortrag im Südwestfunk 5.1.1969," *Neue Beiträge zur George-Forschung* 4 (1979): 38–42; here, 40. See also Edgar Salin, *Um Stefan George: Erinnerung und Zeugnis*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1954).

[10] Alfred Weber, *Kulturgeschichte als Kultursoziologie* (Munich: Piper, 1960); Alfred Weber, *Haben wir Deutschen nach 1945 versagt? Politische Schriften* (Munich: Piper, 1979).

[11] Edgar Salin, *Lynkeus: Gestalten und Probleme aus Wirtschaft und Politik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1963).

[12] Salin, *Um Stefan George*; Salin, *Vom deutschen Verhängnis.*

[13] Edgar Salin, *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1923), *Politische Ökonomie. Geschichte der wirtschaftspolitischen Ideen von Platon bis zur Gegenwart* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1967).

[14] Bertram Schefold, "Nationalökonomie als Geisteswissenschaft: Edgar Salins Konzept einer Anschaulichen Theorie," *List Forum* 18, no. 4 (1992): 303–24.

[15] Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild* (Munich: Piper, 1989), 463–72; Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst: Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1930), 470–77.

[16] For a new assessment of Heidelberg in this period, see Weiller, *Max Weber und die literarische Moderne.*

[17] On Gothein, see Michael Maurer, *Eberhard Gothein (1853–1923): Leben und Werk zwischen Kulturgeschichte und Nationalökonomie* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007); on Heidelberg, see Weiller, *Max Weber und die literarische Moderne.*

[18] Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann, 5th edition (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 142: "Reines Charisma ist spezifisch *wirtschaftsfremd*. Es konstituiert . . . einen 'Beruf' . . . als 'Sendung' oder innere Aufgabe . . . Auf der anderen Seite ist bei einer primär künstlerischen charismatischen Jüngerschaft denkbar, daß die Enthebung aus den Wirtschaftskämpfen durch Begrenzung der im eigentlichen Sinn Berufenen auf 'wirtschaftlich Unabhängige' (also: Rentner) als das Normale gilt (so im Kreise Stefan Georges, wenigstens der primären Absicht nach)." On Weber and George, see Thomas Karlauf, *Stefan George: Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Blessing, 2007), 410–18; and Wolf Lepenies, *Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 283–96.

[19] See, e.g., Erich von Kahler, *Der Beruf der Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Bondi, 1920).

[20] See Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst. Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1930), 471–72.

[21] Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 108–9.

[22] See Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf," in Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988). The lecture took place on 28 January 1919, according to Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber. Die Leidenschaft des Denkens* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2005), 867.

[23] Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 110–11.

[24] Kahler, *Der Beruf der Wissenschaft*.

[25] Hans-Joachim Zimmermann, ed., *Die Wirkung Stefan Georges auf die Wissenschaft: Ein Symposium* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1985).

[26] See Reinhard Blomert, *Intellektuelle im Aufbruch: Karl Mannheim, Alfred Weber, Norbert Elias und die Heidelberger Sozialwissenschaften der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Munich: Hanser, 1999).

[27] Edgar Salin, *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung von Alaska (und Yukon-Territory): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Theorie der Konzentrationsbewegung*, Supplementary Issue no. 12 of *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1914).

[28] On Alfred Weber, see Salin, *Lynkeus*, 58–74.

[29] See Schefold, "Nationalökonomie als Geisteswissenschaft" for a more extensive account.

[30] Salin, *Lynkeus*, Vorwort.

[31] Edgar Salin, *Wirtschaft und Staat: Drei Schriften zur deutschen Weltlage* (Berlin: R. Hobbing, 1932), 187.

[32] Edgar Salin, "Die neue Etappe der industriellen Revolution," in Zimmermann, *Zur Ökonomik und Technik der Atomzeit*, 97–173; here, 133.

[33] Edith Landmann, *Die Transcendenz des Erkennens* (Berlin: Bondi, 1923). On Landmann as an "interpreter" of George's conception of *Wissenschaft*, see Johannes Riedner, "Edith Landmann als philosophische Interpretin und Zeugin Stefan Georges: Zu Problemen der Assimilation im George-Kreis," *Marburger Forum. Beiträge zur geistigen Situation der Gegenwart* 3.4 (2002): 1–14; Korinna Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen,* 28–47; Korinna Schönhärl, "'Die Transcendenz des Erkennens': Erkenntnistheoretische Grundlagen der ökonomischen Methodendiskussion im George-Kreis," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 91.2 (2009): 445–75; and Korinna Schönhärl, "'Wie eine Blume, die erfroren ist': Edith Landmann als Jüngerin Stefan Georges," in *Stefan George: Dichtung — Ethos — Staat. Denkbilder für ein geheimes europäisches Deutschland*, ed. Bertram Schefold and Bruno Pieger (Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg 2010): 207–42.

[34] Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 91.

[35] Edgar Salin, *Platon und die griechische Utopie* (Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1921).

[36] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Platos Denken in Utopien," *Gymnasium* 90 (1983): 434–55.

[37] Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 44.

[38] Edgar Salin, *Civitas Dei* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1926). See Bertram Schefold, "Edgar Salins Deutung der *Civitas Dei*," in *Geschichtsbilder im*

George-Kreis: Wege zur Wissenschaft, ed. Barbara Schlieben, Olaf Schneider, and Kerstin Schulmeyer (Göttingen: Wallstein 2004), 209–47.

[39] Edgar Salin, "Die deutsche volkswirtschaftliche Theorie im 20. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Statistik und Volkswirtschaft* 57 (1921): 87–117; Salin, *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre*.

[40] Salin, *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre*, 40–41.

[41] Edgar Salin, *Die deutschen Tribute. Zwölf Reden gegen den Young-Plan* (Berlin: R. Hobbing, 1930). Gerhard Schulz, *Zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur: Verfassungspolitik und Reichsreform in der Weimarer Republik*, vol. 3 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1992), 325, remarks that Salin was considered one of the "geistige Führer," alongside Hjalmar Schacht, of the right-wing revisionists campaigning against the Young Plan.

[42] See Bertram Schefold, "Reflections of Ancient Economic Thought in Greek Poetry," in *Ancient Economic Thought*, ed. B. B. Brice, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1997), 99–145.

[43] See, e.g., Landmann, *Transcendenz des Erkennens*, 236, 133.

[44] See Friedrich Wolters, "Gestalt," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 2 (Berlin 1911): 137–58. On Wolters's concept of *Gestalt* and its impact on the scholarly work of the Circle, see Carola Groppe, "Konkurrierende Weltanschauungsmodelle im Kontext von Kreisentwicklung und Außenwirkung des George-Kreises: Friedrich Gundolf — Friedrich Wolters," in *Stefan George: Werk und Wirkung seit dem "Siebenten Ring*," ed. Wolfgang Braungart, Ute Oelmann, and Bernhard Böschenstein (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 265–82, esp. 269–70. On the role of the *Gestalt* concept in the Circle more generally, see Wolfgang Braungart, *Ästhetischer Katholizismus: Stefan Georges Rituale der Literatur* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), 95–97; Rainer Kolk, *Literarische Gruppenbildung: Am Beispiel des George-Kreises 1890–1945* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), 375–84; and Gerhard Zöfel, *Die Wirkung des Dichters: Mythologie und Hermeneutik in der Literaturwissenschaft um Stefan George* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987), 144–86.

[45] See, e.g., Heinrich Friedemann, *Platon. Seine Gestalt* (Berlin: Blätter für die Kunst, 1914); and Friedrich Gundolf, *Goethe* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1916).

[46] This statement of intent is taken from an advertisement of Wolters's *Lesewerk*, quoted in Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung*, 281. On *Der Deutsche*, see 276–83.

[47] The "Georgean" publications not discussed here include Friedrich Wolters, *Melchior Lechter* (Munich: Hanfstaengel, 1911); Friedrich Wolters, "Stefan George," *Der Rheinische Beobachter. Wochenschrift für das deutsche Selbstbestimmungsrecht an Rhein, Saar und Ruhr* 2, 34 (19 August 1923): 533–36; Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst. Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1930); and Stefan George, *Gedichte: Auswahl*, selected and edited by Friedrich Wolters (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1930). For Wolters's poetic work, see, e.g., Friedrich Wolters, *Wandel und Glaube* (Berlin: Verlag der Blätter für die Kunst, 1911); and Friedrich Wolters, *Der Wandrer. Zwölf Gespräche* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1924). For his translations, see,

e.g., Friedrich Wolters, *Minnelieder und Sprüche. Übertragungen aus deutschen Minnesängern des XII.–XIV. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Verlag der Blätter für die Kunst, 1909); and Friedrich Wolters, *Hymnen und Sequenzen aus den lateinischen Dichtern des IV. bis XV. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Verlag der Blätter für die Kunst, 1914). For a sample of his nationalist publications in the 1920s, see Friedrich Wolters with Walter Elze, *Stimmen des Rheines. Ein Lesebuch für die Deutschen* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1923); and Friedrich Wolters, *Vier Reden über das Vaterland* (Breslau: Ferdinant Hirt, 1927). On Wolters's personality, see Michael Landmann, "Friedrich Wolters. 1876–1930," in Michael Landmann, *Figuren um George*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini Presse, 1988). The introduction to Michael Philipp, ed., *Stefan George — Friedrich Wolters: Briefwechsel 1904–1930* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini Presse, 1998), 1–61, also contains useful biographical material. See also Carola Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung. Das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890–1933* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 213–89; and Wolfgang Christian Schneider, "Staat und Kreis, Dienst und Glaube. Friedrich Wolters und Robert Boehringer in ihren Vorstellungen von Gesellschaft," in *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens und die Wirklichkeit der Weimarer Republik. Vorstellungen von Staat und Gemeinschaft im George-Kreis*, ed. Roman Köster, Werner Plumpe, Bertram Schefold, Korinna Schönhärl (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 97–122.

[48] See Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 105. Robert Boehringer, too, discerned "Paulinian" traits in Wolters's character ("das Paulinische von Wolters"): Robert Boehringer, *Mein Bild von Stefan George*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1967), 141. See Michael Philipp, "Wandel und Glaube. Friedrich Wolters — Der Paulus des George-Kreises," in *Stefan George: Werk und Wirkung seit dem "Siebenten Ring,"* ed. Wolfgang Braungart, Ute Oelmann, and Bernhard Böschenstein (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 283–99; here, 294–95.

[49] Friedrich Wolters, *Die Zentralverwaltung des Heeres und der Steuern* (Habilitationsschrift: Munich, 1915) = *Geschichte der brandenburgischen Finanzen in der Zeit von 1640–1697*, vol. 2.

[50] See Friedrich Wolters, "Review of Rudolf Wackernagel's *Geschichte des Elsaß 1919*," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 16 (1922): 218–19; Friedrich Wolters, "Von der Herkunft und Bedeutung des Marxismus," in *Bilder und Studien aus drei Jahrtausenden. Eberhard Gothein zum siebzigsten Geburtstag als Festgabe*, ed. Georg Karo, Edgar Salin, Hermann Oncken, et al. (Munich and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1925), 243–47; Friedrich Wolters, "Colbert," in *Meister der Politik. Eine weltgeschichtliche Reihe von Bildnissen*, vol. 2, ed. Erich Marcks and Karl Alexander von Müller (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1923); and Friedrich Wolters, "Der Faschismus," *Wirtschaftsdienst, Weltwirtschaftliche Nachrichten* 10.34 (1925): 1269–71, a review of Johann Wilhelm Mannhardt, *Der Faschismus* (Munich: Beck, 1925).

[51] The book appeared in November 1929, though the date given on the title page states 1930.

[52] See Michael Phillip, "Einleitung," in *Stefan George — Friedrich Wolters: Briefwechsel, 1904–1930*, ed. Michael Philipp (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini Presse, 1998), 17: ". . . neben Landmanns — und früher Wolfskehls und Lepsius's — waren Wolters und Erika das einzige Ehepaar, bei dem George mit beiden Teilen verbunden war."

[53] Friedrich Wolters, *Studien über Agrarzustände und Agrarprobleme in Frankreich von 1700–1790* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1905). Only the first chapter of this book had been submitted as the doctoral thesis.

[54] Friedrich Wolters, "Über die theoretische Begründung des Absolutismus im 17. Jahrhundert," in *Grundrisse und Bausteine zur Staats- und zur Geschichtslehre. Zusammengetragen zu den Ehren Gustav Schmollers und zum Gedächtnis des 24. Juni 1908, seines siebenzigsten Geburtstages*, ed. Friedrich Wolters, Kurt Breysig, Berthold Vallentin, Friedrich Andreae (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1908), 201–22.

[55] Friedrich Wolters, *Herrschaft und Dienst* (Berlin: Otto von Holten, 1909). This was a "Prachtausgabe," illustrated by Melchior Lechter, and the first book to appear with Einhorn-Presse, which Lechter founded in 1909.

[56] Wolters, "Über die theoretische Begründung des Absolutismus," 221.

[57] Wolters, *Herrschaft und Dienst*, 24.

[58] Wolters, *Herrschaft und Dienst*, 43.

[59] *SW*, 6/7:111.

[60] See Wolfgang Christian Schneider, "Staat und Kreis, Dienst und Glaube. Friedrich Wolters und Robert Boehringer in ihren Vorstellungen von Gesellschaft," in Köster, et al., *Das Ideal des schönen Lebens*, 97–122 (104–7).

[61] *George — Wolters: Briefwechsel*, 35.

[62] In their foreword ("Bericht der Kommission"), Schmoller and Hintze lament, evidently with an eye to his Georgean publications, that Wolters's other obligations prevented him from covering all the provinces of Brandenburg in his work: ". . . der Gang der Arbeiten des Herrn Dr. Wolters haben es nun mit sich gebracht, daß das Ganze nicht, wie wir gewünscht hätten, zusammen in einem Band veröffentlicht werden kann . . ." See Wolters, *Die Zentralverwaltung des Heeres und der Steuern*, vi.

[63] Quoted in *George — Wolters: Briefwechsel*, 44.

[64] Friedrich Wolters, "Colbert," in *Meister der Politik: Eine weltgeschichtliche Reihe in Bildnissen*, ed. Erich Marcks and Karl Alexander von Müller, vol. 3 (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1922), 1–38.

[65] Wolters, "Colbert," 9.

[66] Wolters, "Colbert," 17.

[67] For a slightly different assessment of Colbert's policies, see Bertram Schefold, ed., *Savarys "Parfait négociant": Die Ordnung der Märkte durch Händler und Staat* (Düsseldorf: Verlag Wirtschaft und Finanzen, 1993), 15–48.

[68] Wolters, "Colbert," 19.

[69] Wolters, "Colbert," 20.

[70] Wolters, "Colbert," 38.

[71] Friedrich Wolters, *Der Donauübergang und der Einbruch in Serbien durch das IV. Reservekorps im Herbst 1915* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1925).
[72] Friedrich Wolters, *Die Bedingungen des Versailler Vertrages und ihre Begründung. Rede für die von der Universität am Tage der 10 jährigen Wiederkehr der Unterzeichnung des Versailler Vertrages geplante Gedenkstunde*, printed manuscript (Kiel: Buchdruckerei Max Tandler, 1929).
[73] Wolters, *Die Bedingungen des Versailler Vertrages*, 10. George's correspondence with Wolters and with Hugo von Hofmannsthal suggests that he did indeed foresee (and dread) a military conflagration.
[74] Carola Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung: Das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890–1933* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997).
[75] See Georg Simmel, "Stefan George: eine kunstphilosophische Studie," *Neue Deutsche Rundschau*, 12, 2 (Februar 1901): 207–15, reprinted in Georg Simmel, *Zur Philosophie der Kunst* (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer, 1922), 29–45. Simmel was another important bridge between the George Circle and German *Wissenschaft*. On George and Simmel, see Stefan Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus. Stefan George und der deutsche Antimodernismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 169–83; Günther Freymuth, "Georg Simmel und Stefan George," *Neue deutsche Hefte* 17, 3 (1970): 41–50; Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung*, 160–82; Volker Kruse, "Die Heidelberger Soziologie und der Stefan George-Kreis," in *Wissenschaftler im George-Kreis*, 259–76; Michael Landmann, "Georg Simmel und Stefan George," in *Georg Simmel und die Moderne. Neue Interpretationen und Materialien*, ed. Heinz-Jürgen Dahme et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1984), 147–73. Klaus Lichtblau, "Zum Stellenwert der ästhetisch-literarischen Moderne in den kultursoziologischen Gegenwartsanalysen von Georg Simmel und Max Weber," in *Konzepte der Moderne*, ed. Gerhart von Graevenitz (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999), 52–68; Geret Luhr, *Ästhetische Kritik der Moderne. Über das Verhältnis Walter Benjamins und der jüdischen Intelligenz zu Stefan George* (Marburg: LiteraturWissenschaft.de, 2002); Otto G. Oexle, "Georg Simmels Philosophie der Geschichte, der Gesellschaft und der Kultur," in *Geschichtsbilder im George-Kreis*, 19–49.
[76] See Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 58–70; here, 67; and Eduardo Massimilla, "La scienza e il fundamento intersoggetivo dell Erleben: Arthur Salz, in difesa di Max Weber," in Arthur Salz, *Per la scienza contro i suoi colti detrattori*, transl. and ed. Eduardo Massimilla (Naples: Liguori, 1999).
[77] See Marianne Weber, *Lebensbild*, 372, 460, 462.
[78] Arthur Salz, *Für die Wissenschaft. Gegen die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Munich: Drei Masken, 1921); and Kahler, *Der Beruf der Wissenschaft*. On the controversy, see Weiller, *Max Weber und die literarische Moderne*, Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 202–8; and Eduardo Massimilla, "La scienza e il fundamento intersoggetivo dell Erleben."
[79] See Lothar Helbing and Claus Victor Bock, eds., *Stefan George: Dokumente seiner Wirkung aus dem Friedrich Gundolf Archiv der Universität London* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini Presse, 1974).

[80] Friedrich Gundolf, *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1911), V.
[81] See Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 60–61.
[82] See Salz, *Für die Wissenschaft*, and Arthur Salz, "Zur Reform der staatswissenschaftlichen Studien," 43 (22 October 1920): 613–14.
[83] See Johannes Fried, "Zwischem 'Geheimem Deutschland' und 'geheimer Akademie der Arbeit'. Der Wirtschaftswissenschaftler Arthur Salz," in *Geschichtsbilder im George-Kreis*, 249–302; here, 276.
[84] See Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 66–67.
[85] *George-Gundolf: Briefwechsel*, ed. Robert Boehringer with Georg Peter Landmann (Munich: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1962), 349, 372, 374.
[86] Siegmund Kaznelson, ed., *Juden im deutschen Kulturbereich: Ein Sammelwerk*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1959), 41 and 696.
[87] Wera Lewin, "Die Bedeutung des Stefan George-Kreises für die deutsch-jüdische Geistesgeschichte," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 8, no. 1 (1963): 184–213. See also Ernest Kahn, "Jews in the Stefan George Circle," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 8, no. 1 (1963): 171–83.
[88] See Fried, "Der Wirtschaftswissenschaftler Arthur Salz," 259. See also Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 114–16.
[89] Arthur Salz, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kritik der Lohnfondstheorie*, = *Münchener Volkswirtschaftliche Studien* 70, ed. Lujo Brentano and Walther Lotz (Stuttgart and Berlin: J. G. Cotta, 1905).
[90] Salz, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 176.
[91] Salz, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 180–81.
[92] Joseph Schumpeter, review of *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kritik der Lohnfondstheorie*, by Arthur Salz, *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Sozialpolitik und Verwaltung* 15 (1906): 97–98; here, 98.
[93] Arthur Salz, "Kapital, Kapitalformen, Kapitalbildung, Kapitaldynamik," *in Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*, ed. Salomon Altmann, Pt IV, I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1925): 209–57; Arthur Salz, "Grundsätze einer Theorie vom Arbeitslohn," in *Die Wirtschaftstheorie der Gegenwart*, vol. 3, *Einkommensbildung*, ed. Hans Mayer, Frank A. Fetter and Richard Reisch (Vienna: Julius Springer, 1928), 49–83; here, 68.
[94] Arthur Salz, "Wallenstein als Merkantilist," *Mitteilungen des Vereines für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* 47, no. 4 (1909): 433–61.
[95] Arthur Salz, "Ver Sacrum," in *Vom Judentum: ein Sammelbuch,* ed. Verein Jüdischer Hochschüler Bar Kochba Prag (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff, 1913), 169–73.
[96] Salz, "Ver Sacrum," 169–70.
[97] Salz, "Ver Sacrum," 170–71.
[98] Salz, "Ver Sacrum," 169.
[99] Arthur Salz, *Das ewige Frankreich* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1923).
[100] Arthur Salz, "Literatur des Bolschewismus," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 46 (1918–19): 784–805; here, 785.

[101] Salz, "Literatur des Bolschewismus," 804.
[102] It should be noted in this context that although he never obtained a tenured professorship, Salz acted as a replacement for Emil Lederer (1882–1939), who had been "ordentlicher Universitätsprofessor für Sozialpolitik" at the University of Heidelberg since 1920. In 1930, he came close to being appointed as full professor at the Handelshochschule in Mannheim. See Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 67–68; and Klaus-Rainer Brintzinger, "Berufungspraxis vor und nach 1933 an den Universitäten Freiburg, Heidelberg und Tübingen," in *Zur deutschsprachigen wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Emigration nach 1933*, ed. Harald Hagemann (Marburg: Metropolis 1997), 503–33; here, 513.
[103] Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, *Kapital und Kapitalzins*, 2 vols. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1914–21).
[104] Arthur Salz, *Macht und Wirtschaftsgesetz: Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis des Wesens der kapitalistischen Wirtschaftsverfassung* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1930), 47.
[105] But see his reference to Adam Smith in Arthur Salz, *Das Wesen des Imperialismus: Umrisse einer Theorie* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1931), 71.
[106] Arthur Salz, "Ueber einige Beziehungen des Naturrechts zur Sozialphilosophie," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 39 (1914/15): 525–55; here, 525.
[107] Salz, "Kapital, Kapitalformen, Kapitalbildung, Kapitaldynamik," 257.
[108] Arthur Salz to Friedrich Gundolf, 20 December 1901, Gundolf Archive (Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London); quoted in Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 194–95.
[109] Arthur Salz, "Memorials of Alfred Marshall," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 57 (1927): 194–200; here, 195.
[110] For a more detailed discussion of these similarities, see Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 193–208.
[111] John Maynard Keynes, "Einstein," in *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, vol. 10, *Essays and Biography* (London: Macmillan 1972), 382–84.
[112] Donald Richie, *The Japan Times*, 26 October 1979; quoted in Kurt Singer, *Spiegel, Schwert und Edelstein: Strukturen des japanischen Lebens* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 7.
[113] See Kurt Singer, "Aus den Erinnerungen an Stefan George," *Die Neue Rundschau* 18, no. 2 (1957): 298; Kurt Singer, "Die Spur einer Dichterbegegnung: George und Hofmannsthal," *Castrum Peregrini* 4 (1951): 7–29; and Kurt Singer, "Der Streit der Dichter," *Castrum Peregrini* 60 (1963): 5–28.
[114] Hans Brasch, "Die Verstreuten: Ein Gespräch 1943," *Castrum Peregrini* 60 (1963): 29–36.
[115] Brasch, "Die Verstreuten," 36.
[116] Kurt Singer to Ernst Robert Curtius, 6 March 1914, StGA. Quoted in Schönhärl, *Wissen und Visionen*, 99.
[117] Kurt Singer, *Platon, der Gründer* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1927).
[118] *George — Wolters: Briefwechsel*, 83.

[119] Kurt Singer, *Staat und Wirtschaft seit dem Waffenstillstand* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1924), 39.
[120] Singer, *Staat und Wirtschaft*, 97.
[121] Singer, *Staat und Wirtschaft* 99.
[122] Singer, *Staat und Wirtschaft* 229.
[123] "Das Jahr der Seele," *SW*, 4:114.
[124] Kurt Singer, *The Idea of Conflict: Vermehrt um Ausgewählte Schriften zu Wirtschaft und Staat* (1954, repr., Basel: Kyklos, 1973), 200–201.
[125] Singer, *The Idea of Conflict*, 203.
[126] Singer, *The Idea of Conflict* 210.
[127] Singer, *The Idea of Conflict* 212, referring to Sombart, *Die drei Nationalökonomien. Geschichte und Lehre von der Wirtschaft* (München: Duncker und Humblot, 1930)
[128] Singer, *The Idea of Conflict*, 212, 213.
[129] Singer, *The Idea of Conflict*, 215.
[130] Singer, *The Idea of Conflict*, 216.
[131] Singer, *The Idea of Conflict*, 216.
[132] Friedrich Gundolf, *Dichter und Helden* (Heidelberg: Weiss, 1921), 23.

9: "Imperium transcendat hominem": *Reich* and Rulership in Ernst Kantorowicz's *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*

Martin A. Ruehl

Ernst Kantorowicz (1895–1963), though only a junior member of the George Circle in the 1920s, is now generally considered one of its preeminent figures. He is the subject of three biographies, numerous articles, and the secret hero of Ulrich Raulff's recent study on George's afterlife.[1] The cumulative effect of these publications could be described as hagiographical. Kantorowicz, a former Freikorps soldier and an outspoken critic of the democratic and cosmopolitan features of the Weimar Republic, is celebrated as an "arch-liberal" and a "modern humanist," who bravely defended the "Weimarian principles of tolerance and safeguarding human dignity" after the Nazi takeover, before emigrating to the United States in 1938.[2] A curious side-effect of this hagiographical turn has been the revaluation of his 1927 biography of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II. Once decried as "proto-fascistic" mythagoguery and hero-worship,[3] *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* is beginning to be seen in a more favorable light: a methodologically innovative study, boldly at odds with the positivist tradition of German historiography at the time, and now a "standard work" of medieval scholarship.[4] For the large majority of critics today there are no affinities between the politics of *Kaiser Friedrich* and Nazism. They claim that the rulers of the Third Reich merely "perverted" Kantorowicz's elitism and his paean to the "heroic leader";[5] that the nationalist strain of his book was "far removed" from the racist jingoism of National Socialism and ultimately compatible with a "benevolent universalis,"[6] and that Kantorowicz, drawing on Dante, conceived of Frederick as an emperor of *iustitia* and emphasized the "enlightened" features of his rule.[7]

This seems to be the new critical consensus, as the Kantorowicz renaissance continues and increasingly obscures the more problematic aspects of his early work.[8] The more *Kaiser Friedrich* is acclaimed as a seminal historiographical study,[9] it appears, the more its reactionary political dimension sinks into oblivion. Even Robert Norton, otherwise highly alert to the ways in which the ideas of the George Circle paved the way for the coming

of the Third Reich, offers no serious examination of the relationship between the messianism of the Hohenstaufen biography and National Socialism.[10] Norman Cantor's exaggerated claims about Kantorowicz's "impeccable Nazi credentials" barely do justice to the complexity of this relationship,[11] but neither do the hagiographers' celebration of his allegedly resolute antifascist stance in 1933. Kantorowicz's reaction to the Third Reich was ambivalent — as ambivalent as his portrait of Frederick II as a "große deutsche Herrschergestalt."[12] The two are, indeed, related. There are resonances between the notions of *Reich* (empire) and *Herrschaft* (rulership, sovereignty) in *Kaiser Friedrich* and in Nazi ideology. These resonances, which will be investigated below,[13] help to explain why Kantorowicz wavered for a brief, but significant moment in the summer of 1933 in his rejection of a regime that had already begun to persecute him. They also shed light on the more general confusion amongst George's followers after the Nazi seizure of power, which some of them regarded as a first step towards the realization of the "Neues Reich" and the form of *Herrschaft* proclaimed by their Master, while others denounced it as a "gespenstische Verfratzung" of his ideals.[14]

"The Most German Emperor": Frederick II between *Romanitas* and *Deutschtum*

From where did Kantorowicz derive the concepts of *Reich* and rulership that he employed in *Kaiser Friedrich*? Most critics have noted the central importance, in this context, of Stefan George and his Circle, which Kantorowicz entered in 1920. Kantorowicz's notion of *Reich* in particular has frequently been traced back to the Circle's cosmopolitan outlook and its veneration of Italy. The admiration for the South expressed in George's poetry and the Circle's fascination with Mediterranean cultures, most commentators agree, inspired his representation of Frederick II not as a Teutonic hero, but as a Roman emperor, in Dantesque rather than Wagnerian terms.[15]

Clearly, Kantorowicz's studies at Heidelberg under Eberhard Gothein and Alfred von Domaszewski e(1919–21) already directed his attention to universal and "Southern" themes. The "Drang nach Süden," in any event, was a topos in German literature that dated back to Goethe and Winckelmann.[16] But the decisive impulses came indeed from George. It was George, Ernst Morwitz reports, who insisted that Frederick's history be written "als Mythos vom Sehnen des ganzen Volkes nach Einung von Nord und Süd."[17] And the Master played a crucial role in the conception, production and publication of *Kaiser Friedrich*.[18] Kantorowicz's transformation from the Freikorps soldier, who in 1919 had defended the Wilhelmine status quo against the Spartacists in Berlin and the Poles in

Posen, to the herald of a "welthaltig" Germany that was part of and found its completion in the Holy Roman Empire[19] — this transformation was the work, to a great extent, of George and his disciples.

Their influence on the notions of *Reich* and rulership formulated in Kantorowicz's book, however, seems to have been rather more ambiguous than most contemporary critics allow. What these critics overlook is that the politics of the Circle changed dramatically in the course of the Great War. To say that Kantorowicz and the other disciples "easily transferred" George's critique of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Weimar Republic, or to speak of the Circle's "kosmopolitischer Humanismus," "Francophilia," and "europäisch-abendländisch" conception of Germanness,[20] as if these attitudes had remained unchanged since the beginning of the century, obscures the fact that many members of the Circle, including the Master himself, took strongly nationalist positions after 1918. *Kaiser Friedrich*, in many ways, marks the Circle's transition from a more cosmopolitan prewar to a more patriotic postwar outlook or, to invoke the title of Meinecke's famous book, from "Weltbürgertum" to "Nationalstaat."[21]

Introduced to George by Woldemar Uxkull-Gyllenband, who quickly became his intimate associate, and increasingly close to Max Kommerell,[22] Kantorowicz belonged to the generation of disciples that was predominantly shaped by Friedrich Wolters.[23] Although it echoed some of the Circle's earlier cosmopolitan ideas, his book *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* was composed, to a great extent, in the new, more stridently nationalistic key sounded by Wolters and his followers. Kantorowicz's decision to write about Frederick II could already be described as a "national" choice of sorts. His Heidelberg teacher Domaszewski had advised him to tackle universal themes such as the history of Judaism or Byzantium.[24] Kantorowicz, however, under George's influence, chose a thirteenth-century German emperor. And for George in the 1920s, Frederick no longer just embodied the people's yearning for the unification of North and South, he also represented an essentially German heroic figure.[25] Like so many other aspects of his *Weltanschauung*, George's conception of the Middle Ages changed after the First World War. His poem "Die Gräber in Speier," first published in 1903, had invoked the glory of the Holy Roman Empire in order to denounce the Second Reich with its undignified ruler Wilhelm II.[26] In 1928, by contrast, he presented the medieval emperors as the warlike harbingers of a once-again-heroic Germany, mythical figures announcing the violent rebirth of their country. He now spoke of "unsere Kaiser" and of the Hohenstaufen in particular as part of a specifically German historical legacy.[27] As he told Berthold Vallentin in October 1924, "Was für eine Pracht bildeten die Staufer! So etwas bietet die Geschichte keines anderen Volkes."[28]

Kantorowicz's Frederick, to be sure, was still in many respects a foreign figure. His relations with the Orient took a prominent place in *Kaiser*

Friedrich and so did his program to renew the former Roman Empire, the *renovatio imperii Romanorum*.[29] Kantorowicz frequently emphasised Frederick's "Mediterranean" attributes — his Roman spirit,[30] his exotic entourage, his strong affinities with Sicily — and made much of the civilizing influence his *romanitas* had on Germany. His Hohenstaufen hero often seems to emerge less as one of "unsere Kaiser" than as an embodiment of that unification of German and Roman blood that George had celebrated in *Der Stern des Bundes* (1914).[31] Indeed, he at one point calls Frederick a "Römer schwäbischen Blutes."[32] At the same time, though, he presented the emperor as an essentially German figure. Frederick's *Reich*, for Kantorowicz, was more than just an attempt at a renewal of the Roman Empire. It also formed the backdrop to the birth of the German nation and symbolized Germany's potential to rule the West.

A number of passages in *Kaiser Friedrich* indicate the extent to which Kantorowicz viewed *romanitas* and classical antiquity from an essentially germanocentric angle. His comments on Frederick's Proclamation of Mainz (1235), for instance, demonstrate that Rome for him was not the glorious, yet quasi-unattainable ideal of the "Northerners" that it had been, say, in George's *Der Teppich des Lebens* (1899) — but a cultural catalyst for the awakening young Germany of the early thirteenth century.[33] Kantorowicz labels the Proclamation of Mainz the earliest law in the German language and regards it as evidence that German now was recognized as on an equal level with Latin. It announced the emergence of a specifically German form of polity, the manifestation of the German essence, and the first "casting off" (*Niederlegen*) of the Roman "frame" (*Gerüst*), which had become superfluous, he remarked, at least in linguistic terms.[34] What Kantorowicz envisions here is neither Hölderlin's revival of classical antiquity through Germany nor George's unification of North and South: it is the emergence of the German *Kulturnation*.

This reevaluation of the relationship between Germany and the civilization of ancient Rome was in accordance with the highly patriotic *Antikenrezeption* of the group around Wolters. Kommerell, for instance, considered Klopstock's encounter with classical Greek poetry as a step towards the renewal of German culture and its liberation from Western falsification.[35] Vallentin, in a similar vein, observed that for Winckelmann, antiquity and Rome were not the final objective but rather a way to lead the German back to himself, to get him to incarnate his spirit and make it visible.[36] For Kantorowicz, too, Rome was a means, rather than the measure, of German culture. Hence, his anxious qualification that Germany's Romanization at the hands of Frederick did not imply that the Germans had to surrender their most essentially Germanic traits; Frederick's Roman Empire integrated what was most characteristic and best in German culture.[37] At one point, Kantorowicz even inverted the commonplace *Italia docet* and pointed to Italy's cultural indebtedness to Germany. Through its

mercenary soldiers, whom Frederick employed in his wars against the city-states of Lombardy, Germany played no negligible part in the Italian Renaissance, Kantorowicz observed, as the Italians of the late thirteenth century, and still more of later days, would have had no conception of a knight if it had not been for the thousands of young German nobles whom Frederick first attracted to Italy. When this southbound stream of German knights dried up towards the end of the Renaissance, it was, he laconically concluded, Italy's loss.[38]

From the Kyffhäuser to *Mitteleuropa*: The Politics of Ghibellenism

The various passages cited above, to be sure, must be set in relation to the instances in *Kaiser Friedrich* where Kantorowicz stresses Frederick's Mediterranean qualities and the "civilization" of Germany through Rome. They nonetheless demonstrate that he by no means "discarded the national issue in the book," as one recent commentator argued.[39] The extent to which Kantorowicz actually emphasised the national issue becomes even clearer when his book is set in the context of the larger historiographical debates about the Hohenstaufen emperors that began in the middle of the nineteenth century and continued right into the 1920s. For the Hohenstaufen biography was a contribution not only to the increasingly nationalist rhetoric of the George Circle, but also to a drawn-out, ideologically charged debate within German medieval scholarship. Kantorowicz's position in this debate is best described as "Ghibelline."[40]

In nineteenth-century Germany, Ghibellinism meant a strongly anti-papal attitude coupled with fundamental support for the Hohenzollern whose German mission, however, was conceived as a continuation of the Imperial tradition of the medieval emperors. This Ghibelline ideal of a second *translatio imperii*, from the Holy Roman Emperors to the House of Brandenburg, found monumental expression in the *Kyffhäuserdenkmal*, erected in 1896 on top of the Kyffhäuser Mountain in Thuringia, which featured a massive equestrian statue of the first Prussian emperor of the Second Reich, Wilhelm I (1797–1888), above a sandstone figure of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1122–90); a huge imperial crown towers over both.[41]

The Kyffhäuser legend, one of the most potent myths of national renewal in nineteenth-century Germany, centered on the notion that a medieval emperor would magically return to end "die kaiserlose, die schreckliche Zeit" (in Schiller's words), unify the German lands and lead them to victory over their enemies.[42] The legend originally centered on Frederick II, but in the course of the nineteenth century Frederick I, also known as Frederick Barbarossa, gradually replaced his grandson as the

object of Germany's national dreams, arguably because of his more Germanic appearance and his greater political involvement north of the Alps, especially in Eastern Europe. What perhaps weighed even more heavily in the eyes of German patriots was the charge that Frederick II's almost total absorption in his *Regnum Italicum* had impeded the growth of a centralized German nation-state.

In the introduction to his *Geschichte der preußischen Politik* (1855), Johann Gustav Droysen, next to Friedrich Wilhelm von Giesebrecht perhaps the most prominent representative of the Ghibelline idea in the German historical profession, held up the universal monarchy of the Hohenstaufen as a model for the new German Reich. In the Middle Ages, according to Droysen, the Hohenstaufen Empire had been the expression of Germany's world-dominating position; now Prussia, "das letzte Aufleuchten" of the Ghibelline principle, was to realize the yearning for the medieval *Reich* and restore the superior significance of the German nation.[43] The Ghibellines espoused a decidedly expansive conception of the *Reich* that subsequently served to legitimize Germany's imperialist turn to "world policy"[44] and its annexationist claims in the First World War.

It was no coincidence that in his 1930 speech at the *Historikertag* in Halle, Kantorowicz invoked Droysen and Giesebrecht as models for his own brand of "Geschichtsschreibung," and not Jacob Burckhardt, whose portrait of Frederick and Ezzelino in the *Kultur der Renaissance* had relied on the *Cento novelle antiche*, anticipating Kantorowicz's use of sagas and anecdotes in *Kaiser Friedrich*. He did not invoke Nietzsche, however, whose critique of historicist objectivity had inspired so many of the hero-worshipping biographies from the George Circle. At Halle, Kantorowicz placed himself very self-consciously in the Ghibelline tradition, applauding Giesebrecht's *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit* as the last truly nationalist history of the Middle Ages and citing one of Heinrich von Sybel's mordant anti-Catholic pamphlets as an example of politically engaged historical writing. But even though he extolled the strongly patriotic sentiment of Sybel's historiographical works, Kantorowicz stressed, significantly, that Sybel's *kleindeutsch* standpoint in the controversy with Julius von Ficker was not after his taste.[45]

Methodological issues apart, Kantorowicz's representation of Frederick as a "große deutsche Herrschergestalt" was hardly as far removed from the mainstream of German medieval scholarship as some critics today maintain or as he himself contended at Halle. If *Kaiser Friedrich* was born out of the spirit of one of the most self-consciously esoteric circles in the Weimar Republic, it also represented an intervention in a highly topical — and highly politicized — historiographical debate. This intervention was two-fold. On the one hand, Kantorowicz defended the imperial policy of the Hohenstaufen, along with Albert Brackmann,[46] Adolf Hofmeister, Robert

Holtzmann, and a host of other Ghibelline historians, against the neo-Sybelites Georg von Below and Fritz Kern.[47] On the other hand, he took issue with the Ghibellines themselves insofar as the overwhelming majority of them, while praising Frederick Barbarossa and Henry VI, condemned Frederick II as an "un-German" emperor[48] who had brought about the decline of the empire and of Germany's former European hegemony.[49] For Kantorowicz, by contrast, Frederick's reign marked the cultural and political culmination of the Holy Roman Empire as well as the Regnum Teutonicum. The boy from Apulia, in his eyes, was at the same time "der deutscheste Kaiser," and as such deserved a place in the Ghibelline pantheon.[50] In the context of the heated contemporary debates about the *Reich* in general and the Hohenstaufen emperors in particular, this recuperation of Frederick as a Ghibelline hero was a political statement. In order to define the politics of Kantorowicz's *Friedrichbild* more clearly, we need to take a closer look at the ways in which his book participated in — and deviated from — the Ghibelline discourse.

The Ghibelline bias of *Kaiser Friedrich* is perhaps most noticeable in the last two chapters of the book, which recount the final stages of Frederick's conflict with the pope. Frederick here appears either as the tragic victim of the intrigues and ardent hatred of Innocence IV and Rainer of Viterbo, or as the demonic persecutor of "verderbter Klerus."[51] The fervently anti-Catholic sentiment that pervades these passages — epitomised in the Nietzsche quote that opens chapter 9[52] — seems to transport us back to the days of the *Kulturkampf*.[53] In a famous speech before the Prussian Upper House in March 1873, Bismarck himself had described his confrontation with Roman Catholicism as a continuation of the conflict between the Hohenstaufen emperors and the medieval popes.[54] It is significant, in this context, that Kantorowicz labelled Frederick's papal adversaries, if perhaps unintentionally, "Reichsfeinde"[55] — the term Bismarck had coined to decry the Catholic Center Party.

Filled with such anti-ultramontane zeal, Kantorowicz sometimes emphasises the opposition between *imperium* and *ecclesia* in a way that is hardly warranted by the sources. His description of Frederick's self-coronation in Jerusalem in 1229 as a conscious step towards the establishment of a wholly secular "Weltherrschaft," for instance, largely obscures the fact, as Brackmann rightly pointed out,[56] that the emperor's room for maneuver in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was seriously constrained because he sought reconciliation with the pope. At another point, Kantorowicz seems to envision a form of Caesaropapism, contemplating, with much relish but little historical plausibility, Frederick's annexation and secularization of the Papal States.[57] The 1935 radio lecture "Deutsches Papsttum" projected a similar scenario: the establishment of a non-Roman German National Church, in which the Apostolic See, transferred to a German diocese (Mainz or Trier) and occupied by a German bishop, would be strictly sub-

ordinate to the emperor.[58] With its vehement attacks on sodomising monks, lewd clergymen, and the "welsch-humanistisches Gedankenarsenal" of the papacy,[59] this lecture often sounds more like an echo of Wolters's tirades against the Catholic Church[60] than a defence of George's "Mediterranean" notion of *Deutschtum*.[61]

The scion of a wealthy, liberal Jewish family living in the capital of the Prussian province of Posen, Kantorowicz had grown up in a decidedly anti-Catholic milieu.[62] The Jewish population of Posen traditionally identified itself with Lutheran Germany against the Catholic Poles, who represented the ethnic majority.[63] It was no coincidence that the new synagogue in the Teichstraße (built in 1907) resembled the Hohenzollern *Residenzschloß*, whose construction had begun several years earlier under the auspices of Wilhelm II. With the *Residenzschloß*, Wilhelm, who cherished a few Ghibelline dreams of his own,[64] had placed a piece of Hohenstaufen architecture in the middle of the new Posen to commemorate the "German civilizing mission" in Poland initiated by the medieval emperors and continued by the Maison de Brandenbourg.[65] The tower chapel of the castle — conceived, apparently, as a direct counterpoint to the neo-Byzantine chapel in the (Polish) cathedral — paraphrased the interior of the Capella Palatina in Palermo.[66] Like the relief of the Bismarck Tower at Lake Starnberg, which was decorated with images of Charlemagne and Frederick I, the imperial castle expressed the continuity between the Hohenstaufen and the Hohenzollern. Insofar as it copied the monumental Romanesque architecture of the Residenzschloß, the new synagogue proudly announced its partisanship for the German cause.

As a member of the "Synagogenbaukommission,"[67] Kantorowicz's father Joseph had been involved in the erection of the synagogue at the edge of the Ringforum, the new *national-deutsch* heart of Posen. In 1906, he and his family moved into a spacious apartment on the Hohenzollernstraße. Young Kantorowicz, thus, was surrounded by a symbolically charged cityscape that associated Prussia with the German Middle Ages and both with the spirit of anti-ultramontanism. In the aftermath of the Great War, he defended this Ghibelline trinity, as a member of the Posen-based "Deutsche Volkswehr,"[68] against the Polish independence movement that was headed by the workers' and soldiers' councils and supported by the Catholic Church. The latter eventually won the day when, in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, the German provinces Posen and Western Prussia were ceded to Piłsudski's Poland.

The loss of these territories caused an intensified interest in *Ostforschung* among German medievalists in the 1920s. Calling upon the successive colonization of the East Elbian lands since the time of Otto the Great, many of them endeavoured to demonstrate that the Versailles settlement ignored their nation's great cultural legacy in Eastern Europe and needed to be revised accordingly.[69] While most agreed that Germany's "drive east-

wards" in the Middle Ages had been the great colonizing feat of the German people, as Karl Hampe had described it,[70] there were crucial differences between Ghibellines and neo-Sybelites with regard to the relation between the Italian and the "Eastern" policy of the German emperors. Von Below and Kern claimed that the Reich's Eastern expansion, which should have been the emperors' absolute priority, had been tragically undermined by their involvement in the Mediterranean.[71] For Ghibellines such as Holtzmann and Brackmann, by contrast, the *Römerzug*, insofar as it implied the guardianship and, potentially, domination of the papacy, was the necessary precondition for a successful missionary and colonizing policy in the East.[72]

Like Brackmann, Kantorowicz conceived Frederick's Eastern policy in the context of his Italian plans, emphasising that the Christianization of heathen Prussia by the Order of the Teutonic Knights since 1233 proceeded under the secular aegis of Frederick, not the pope; that Frederick, in fact, had anticipated the papal plans to convert Prussia with the help of the Cistercians.[73] Though the relevant documents suggested that compared to Charlemagne, Henry I, or Otto the Great, Frederick had played a somewhat minor role in Germany's drive eastwards,[74] Kantorowicz nonetheless turned him into the patron of what he, in accordance with the large majority of contemporary German medievalists, called the Reich's "Eastern European mission." Indirectly, through the Master of the Teutonic Knights, Hermann von Salza, he argued, Frederick had gained the heathen lands between the Vistula and the Neman Rivers for the Hohenstaufen empire and thus participated in the foundation of the Prussian state.[75] Hermann's Order, according to Kantorowicz, was modeled on the Sicilian kingdom and so carried over a spiritual essence, "ein Geistiges," from Frederick's southern model state to the plains of Eastern Europe, where it would later be incorporated in the Hohenzollern monarchy.[76] Just as the *Residenzschloß* in Posen proclaimed the continuation of the Hohenstaufen legacy by the Hohenzollern, Kantorowicz, in classic Ghibelline fashion, thus established a trajectory from the First to the Second Reich. Significantly, he wanted a copy of *Kaiser Friedrich* sent to the last great political representative of the Hohenzollern tradition in the Weimar Republic, Paul von Hindenburg.[77]

The centerpiece of Kantorowicz's Ghibellinism in the book, however, was his defense of Frederick's Imperial policy. The traditional charge in this respect, originally leveled by Sybel and repeated in the 1920s by von Below, was, as we have seen, that the Hohenstaufen's involvement in Lombardy had decisively impeded the subsequent political and economic development of a Cenral European nation state. Although there was broad agreement now that Sybel's condemnation of the Hohenstaufen had not done justice to the necessarily universal conception of the *Reich* in the High Middle Ages, almost all medievalists admitted that Frederick II's

policy in particular had fatefully de-centralized Germany. More than anybody else, according to Haller, Frederick II, who abducted the German imperial crown to Italy and severed the "Lebenswurzeln" of the German monarchy, was responsible for the absence of a strong and unified German state in the following five hundred years.[78] Even Hampe, who otherwise hailed Frederick as a brilliant ruler and harbinger of the Renaissance, soberly conceded that Frederick always viewed Germany from the vantage point of his universal policy, whose center of gravity he moved to Italy. There could be no question, for him, that this had significantly contributed to the decline of central power in Germany.[79]

Against the weight of such academic authorities and — again — most of the historical evidence, Kantorowicz not only defended Frederick II's imperial policy, but actually reinterpreted it as "die tiefste damals mögliche Erfüllung des Nationalen."[80] Even though he subordinated, at least prima facie, Germany to his Italian lands, Frederick, Kantorowicz contended, had very definite plans for the establishment of a more centralized German nation. Far from particularizing his German lands, Kantorowicz believed that the emperor aimed at an intensification of state power in Germany accordingto the Sicilian model.[81] As in his intervention in Prussia, Frederick achieved this goal not directly, but "auf mittelbarem Wege," through a temporary strengthening of the German princes. Eventually, however — that is, after a successful completion of his Italian campaigns — he was going to reassert his "übergeordnete kaiserliche Zentralgewalt" north of the Alps. Some of the constitutional changes he initiated in Germany already pointed in this direction, and even his engagement in Lombardy and Sicily, Kantorowicz speculated, ultimately may have served this purpose. With a few bold strokes of his mythographic brush, Kantorowicz radically redrew the image of Frederick II's German policy and presented him as nothing less than the "End- und Erfüllungskaiser der deutschen Träume," who had "in einem höheren Sinne das deutsche Einreich vollendet."[82]

As father of the German *Reich*, godfather of Prussia, and ingenious antagonist of the pope, the Hohenstaufen emperor emerged like a medieval Bismarck from the pages of *Kaiser Friedrich.* In the evocative final paragraph, Kantorowicz in fact alluded to the Iron Chancellor as the *Reich*'s "größtem Vasallen." There is a strong sense, indeed, that the so-called "ideas of 1871," no less than the "ideas of 1914," informed his biography of Frederick II. The empire Kantorowicz envisioned in 1927, however, was not the one founded by Bismarck in 1871 or the one for which he himself had taken up arms in 1914. Like Martin Spahn, Moeller van den Bruck, and Johannes Haller, he conceived the new *Reich* in much grander dimensions. The reference to Bismarck at the end of the book actually seems to have been less a form of praise than a reminder that the Hohenzollern Empire was not the final fulfillment of Germany's "Ghibelline

yearning,"[83] and that Frederick's *Reich* had yet to emerge: the *Reich*'s greatest vassal (Bismarck) and the "greybeard" (Wilhelm I), we read here, only realised the *kleindeutsch* dreams centering on the "grizzled sleeper" (the mythic figure of Barbarossa in the Kyffhäuser),[84] but the "Lord of the Beginning" (Frederick II) and his "Volk" (the German people in its "welthaltig" totality) remained unredeemed.[85]

The *Reich* invoked at the end of *Kaiser Friedrich*, to be sure, cannot easily be identified with any particular political program. Its extensions, like those of the Secret Germany, seemed to correspond "à aucune géopolitique réelle,"[86] and hardly provided the basis for specific irredentist claims. There is some evidence, however, that the *Reichsidee* underlying the Hohenstaufen biography had a more concrete revisionist dimension than most of today's critics allow. Kantorowicz, for one thing, viewed his own historiographical work as a concretely political, patriotic affair. In the period of hopelessness following the national breakdown of 1918, he declared in his Halle speech, it was the duty of the German historian to demonstrate his "fanatischer Glaube" in the endangered fatherland and to preach "das Dogma von der würdigen Zukunft der Nation und ihrer Ehre."[87]

The idealized image of the Hohenstaufen "world empire" projected in *Kaiser Friedrich* thus functioned as a mirror held up to and a weapon against Weimar.[88] Its symbol was the Roman eagle emblazoned on the yellow imperial banners at Frederick's triumphal procession through Cremona after the Battle of Cortenuova (1237), which Kantorowicz, significantly, portrayed as a victory of German arms.[89] Weimar, on the other hand, stood for Germany's defeat and humiliation, territorial loss, and financial bondage at the hands of the enemy, most notably France. The lament that the Germans had failed to clean "den blutgetränkten Adler"[90] had unmistakably political implications: to undo Weimar and Versailles and to realize the first "ewigdeutsche" possibility, the *Reich.* In this respect, the eagle resembled the phoenix,[91] the potent symbol of rebirth and renewal that Kantorowicz would go on to study in *The King's Two Bodies.*

Insofar as it referred back to Rome — as opposed to Prussia — the eagle also carried imperialist, expansionist connotations. Just as Frederick II had revived the universal *imperium Romanum*, the new Reich would revive the trans-European legacy of the Holy Roman Empire, transcending the *kleindeutsch* boundaries of Bismarck's nation-state. In Frederick's *renovatio* plans, the German lands had evidently played a secondary role at best, as a reservoir of mercenaries for his campaigns in Northern Italy. For the author of *Kaiser Friedrich*, however, Frederick's renewal of the old "Weltstellung" of imperial Rome, had equally renewed Germany's universal role. Only in the larger geopolitical arena of Frederick's *Reich* could the German universal capacities manifest themselves. Through Frederick, he asserted, the entire *imperium*, not just the lands north of the Alps, could

be German.[92] Although he made much of its Southern orientation, Kantorowicz left no doubt that the Holy Roman Empire was also the empire of the German nation, a vehicle for the realization of the German European mission. In accordance with the large majority of Ghibellines in the 1920s, he embraced a *Reichsidee* that was supra-national, but at the same time deeply germanocentric.[93]

Scholars like David Abulafia and Carl Landauer contend that Kantorowicz's references to Germany's "Welthaltigkeit" do not add up to a subtextual blueprint for German continental hegemony, but rather reflect a truly European, universal conception of Frederick and his *Reich*.[94] There are indeed a number of passages in *Kaiser Friedrich* that seem to support this contention. So, for example, Kantorowicz once remarks that in Frederick's empire, there was no subjection of other nations by one nation, just an alliance of all monarchs and all people of Christendom under the Roman Emperor. At another point, he even calls medieval Europe a "gleichberechtigte Völkergemeinschaft," which Frederick, no less than Dante, had envisioned.[95] The universalism that appears to reverberate in these two quotations, however, is deceptive.[96] "Welthaltigkeit," for Kantorowicz, did not mean "Weltbürgertum" and his vision of a European Reich ultimately accommodated the notion of German supremacy.[97]

The reference to Dante draws attention to the ambiguities of his allegedly egalitarian *Reichsidee*. Dante, after all, conceived a universal ruler in *De monarchia* who was more than just primus inter pares: an ideal monarch who would reign over the other European nations as subjects, not as sovereign equals. Frederick II himself, it is true, famously declared that God had placed him before the other European kings: "prae regibus orbis terrae sublime constituit" — *prae regibus*, that is, not *super reges*.[98] Kantorowicz, though, saw Frederick through the lens of *De monarchia* and portrayed him — in "Dantesque terms" indeed — as "dominus mundi,"[99] the absolute universal ruler above the other kings. At the beginning of his book, he had already applauded Henry VI's "deutsche Weltherrschaft" which reduced all other European nations, most notably France and England, to the status of vassal states, forcing them "vor seinem Kaiserthron in den Staub." Throughout *Kaiser Friedrich*, Kantorowicz frequently exalted Frederick's empire, like Henry VI's, over the individual monarchies of thirteenth-century Europe.[100] The anachronistic comparisons between Frederick and Napoleon, between the Hohenstaufen empire and the "Napoleonic world kingdom," are revealing in this context.[101] The reference to Frederick's *Reich* as a "großes mitteleuropäisches Imperium" is another telling turn of phrase. Ever since Paul de Lagarde's *Deutsche Schriften*,[102] *Mitteleuropa* had been a synonym for German supremacy on the continent, whether in Friedrich Naumann's more federalist, economic plans,[103] the aggressively annexationist claims of

the Pan-Germans during the First World War, or the irredentist rhetoric of the Weimar historian Wilhelm Schüßler, who called for a drastic revision of the boundaries imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and the recuperation of "deutscher Volksraum" in Eastern and South Eastern Europe.[104] Like Schüßler, Spahn, and other contemporary theoreticians of *Mitteleuropa*, Kantorowicz legitimized these German claims to European leadership with reference to the Middle Ages, when Germany was the "Land der Kaiser," France only the "Land der Könige."[105]

In the light of these contemporary discourses on *Mitteleuropa* and the *Reich*, the political contours of Kantorowicz's "universalism" become more readily apparent. His insistence on the "Roman" or "welthaltig" dimension of Germany under Frederick II's rule reflected less a benevolent cosmopolitanism than a deeply felt belief in Germany's mission to lead the West.[106] Marc Bloch traced this germanocentric interpretation of the Holy Roman Empire in the 1920s back to the imperialist legacy of Wilhelmine Germany: *Weltpolitik*, as the French medievalist shrewdly observed, had aroused a fellow feeling for the medieval *Weltherrschaft*. "It might not be impossible even today," he wrote in 1928, "to trace [the effects of the *Reichsidee*] in certain undercurrents of German patriotism that reveal a fundamental will to power"[107] — an allusion, no doubt, to the neo-Ghibelline visions of a once again powerful German Reich dominating the European continent. For Bloch, Kantorowicz's "nationalisme historique" obviously participated in these undercurrents.[108]

Caesar, Messiah, Antichrist: Sacralization of the Political

Kantorowicz's brand of Ghibellinism was a far cry from Droysen's, for whom Germany's superior significance rested, ultimately, in its role as a "Friedensstaat" in the heart of Europe, with a pacifying influence on the rest of the continent.[109] Kantorowicz, by contrast, understood Germany's "Weltaufgabe" in more militantly expansionist terms, as his resonant allusions to the mission in the East, Alsace, the German Vespers, and *Mitteleuropa* betray. In the eyes of Droysen, the liberal scholar, Germany had universal significance also as an exemplary constitutional state (*Verfassungsstaat*).[110] Kantorowicz, on the other hand, although he made much of Frederick's role as "Friedefürst" and the embodiment of *iustitia*, shared none of these liberal ideals. The popular view of Frederick as a liberal and tolerant prince, he emphatically remarked, was misconceived: Frederick was the most intolerant emperor ever to emerge in the West.[111]

While this was a historically more accurate assessment of Frederick than the traditional image of the "enlightened" ruler,[112] Kantorowicz often seems excessively fascinated by the manifestations of the emperor's

authoritarianism, not least his cruel treatment of the Jews and Saracens. In glowing terms he describes Frederick's "nackte Gewaltherrschaft" over Sicily and the Greater Italian Signoria, justifying even his most ruthless political acts — such as the execution of Marcellin of Arezzo in 1247 — with reference to the Machiavellian notion of necessity of state ("Staatsnotwendigkeit").[113] Like an oriental despot, we read, Frederick reigned over his Sicilian subjects, whom Kantorowicz considers as mere "Menschenstoff."[114] Through the emperor's brilliant political craftsmanship, this human substance was transformed into a state that was also a work of art ("Kunstwerk") — an allusion to Burckhardt's *Kultur der Renaissance*.[115] This state rested on a highly efficient, bureaucratized system of control and exploitation. Its centralization was absolute: no form of individual life and mobility was possible without the permission of the emperor, all expressions of pluralism and opposition were paralyzed as "staatsfeindliche Gifte."[116] Frederick's Sicily had nothing in common with the enlightened monarchies projected by Montesquieu and Kant. Instead it resembled, as Kantorowicz intimated in a revealing comparison, Fichte's strictly centralized, autarchic "Handelsstaat."[117] According to Burckhardt, this was a "Gewaltstaat" and as such, ultimately, "kulturwidrig."[118] For Kantorowicz, however, the iron clamps of the state were a necessary precondition for the burgeoning proto-Renaissance culture of the thirteenth century.[119]

While researching his book in southern Italy in the spring of 1924, Kantorowicz observed how the Fascists proclaimed Frederick as the father of their *Italia imperiale* and a precursor of il Duce.[120] The latter was greatly admired in the Circle.[121] There is some evidence that Kantorowicz viewed Frederick's rule through the lens of the Fascist ideologists,[122] that his "model of the 'total' state" (as Otto Oexle put it) was modeled, in its turn, on their ideal of the totalitarian state.[123] So, for example, he described Frederick's strike against the papacy in 1240 as a "Marsch auf Rom," alluding to the blackshirts' coup d'état of 1922.[124] Similarly, his enthusiastic account of the complete nationalization of all aspects of life in his Sicilian kingdom seems to have been inspired by Mussolini's famous formula "everything within the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State."[125] Like Giulio Giglioli, Carlo Paluzzi and a host of other Italian scholars, whose "culto della Romanità" in the 1920s and 1930s posited a trajectory between the *imperium Romanum* and Mussolini's Italy,[126] Kantorowicz focused almost exclusively on the imperial tradition in Italian politics, comparing Frederick to Augustus and glorifying his Regnum Italicum as a "Caesarenstaat."[127] As the Renaissance historian Hans Baron noted in a critical review, the emphasis on Frederick's *renovatio imperii Romanorum* in *Kaiser Friedrich* marginalized the contemporary emergence of a republican ideology in the city-states of Lombardy and Tuscany. For Baron, the revival of the ancient republican notion of civic virtue

("Bürger-virtus") in these communes marked the true beginning of the Renaissance.[128] According to Kantorowicz, however, the citizens of northern Italy were boundlessly fed up, as he put it in a typically disdainful aside, with the quest for uncertain liberty ("unbestimmte Freiheit") and actually inclined to a dictatorship ("Diktatur").[129]

Most importantly, perhaps, the fusion of political and theological categories in Kantorowicz's portrait of Frederick as a "Messiaskaiser" seems to be indebted to the sacralization of politics, which played, as Emilio Gentile has shown, such a central role in the symbolic universe of Italian Fascism.[130] Witnessing the popular celebrations on the occasion of Mussolini's concordat with the Catholic Church in February 1929, Aby Warburg felt that he was present at the repaganization of Rome.[131] The revival of emperor worship in Fascist Italy made it difficult, in Arnaldo Momigliano's words, to separate "adulation from political emotion, and political emotion from religious or superstitious excitement."[132] Kantorowicz, in his Hohenstaufen biography, similarly blurred these boundaries between the political and the religious. His identification of Frederick's enemies of the state as "heretics," for instance, recalls an article in *Critica fascista* of 1923, which compared the right of the Fascists to "excommunicate" those with "heretical views toward the fatherland" to the right of the Church to "cast heretics out of the communion of true believers."[133] His glorification of Frederick as the *salvator* and *imperator* described by Dante, likewise reiterated the Fascists' idealization of Mussolini as "the man destined to give life to Dante's idea: that the two great symbols, the Eagle and the Cross, would be brought together again in Rome."[134] The secularization of Christian symbols and the establishment of a *sacrum imperium* with its own proper "Staatsreligion" and sacraments was part and parcel of Fascist propaganda in the 1920s.[135] As Kantorowicz himself noted in *Laudes Regiae*, il Duce, like Frederick seven hundred years earlier, was frequently acclaimed as a new Christ.[136]

At the same time, the political theology of *Kaiser Friedrich* also belonged to a specifically German tradition of sacralized politics that dated back to the early nineteenth century[137] and was revived in the 1920s, most notably by Carl Schmitt and Emanuel Hirsch.[138] Thinkers originally close to the Circle such as Rudolf Borchardt hoped for the replacement of the Weimar Republic by a sacralized empire.[139] George's own "Catholic paganism"[140] provided a further model. According to Melchior Lechter, George never had an inner relation to the essential mysteries of the Catholic Church; he just used the outer form of Catholicism for his own purposes.[141] As prophet and God of his own faith, he presided over an *ecclesia* of devoted disciples who referred to themselves as his "Staat."[142] There can be little doubt that the lived experience of this "Staat," with its hierarchical-hieratic structures and pseudoreligious language, inspired Kantorowicz's representation of Frederick II's *sacrum imperium* — and

perhaps even some of his later studies on medieval political theology, whose ultrascholarly style hardly betray their Georgean origins.[143] The famous 1949 article "Pro Patria Mori," for instance, picked up a subject first broached in Wolters's speech "Vom Sinn des Opfertodes für das Vaterland" (1925): the transformation of the Christian notion of martyrdom into the patriotic ideal of the soldier's self-sacrifice for the fatherland.[144]

Whatever its inspiration, Kantorowicz's sacral conception of Frederick II and his state was intimately connected with his notion of total *Herrschaft*. Not only the mind, but also the soul of the subjects belonged, as he repeatedly pointed out, to Frederick. There was no salvation outside of his empire, for the men of this world were still unredeemed and could only be delivered to a state of Grace by the ruler and the State.[145] But Kantorowicz's representation of Frederick as Saviour and Christ was ambiguous. In the apocalyptic crescendi of the final chapters, Frederick appeared, alternatively, as the Messiah and the Antichrist, the redeemer of his people and their "dämonischer Richtergott."[146] The demonization of Frederick at the end of *Kaiser Friedrich* recalls the beginning of Burckhardt's *Kultur der Renaissance*, which depicted the Italian tyrants as fascinating incarnations of evil who proudly rejected Christian dogma and morality and lived an essentially godless life. Kantorowicz's description of Frederick's political genius as an example of Machiavellian *virtù*, "eine Einung von Kraft und Talent, die auch das Böse verträgt," in fact, was a direct quotation from Burckhardt.[147] Like Burckhardt, Kantorowicz seems to have been fascinated by what Wolters called "dämonischer Tatstoff."[148] Next to many positive qualities, his Staufen hero also possessed malice, violence, cunning, and the capacity as well as the inclination to evil. He was — to employ Droysen's terminology — a fundamentally "unsittlich" ruler, and Kantorowicz eagerly justified, indeed glorified him as such. He described the emperor's final conflict with the pope, accordingly, as an apocalyptic struggle between Good and Evil, Christ and Antichrist, and suggested that his hero embodied both: "die Himmels Gottes" and "die tiefsten Höllen." In the end, Frederick was overcome not by human force, but by divine power alone.[149] This was the meaning of the Goethe epigram at the beginning of the last chapter: "Nemo contra deum, nisi deus ipse."[150]

Eagle, Cross, and Swastika: Kantorowicz in 1933

In a 1962 biographical sketch, Kantorowicz's Heidelberg friend and fellow medievalist Percy Ernst Schramm portrayed Hitler in terms remarkably similar to this final image of Frederick as a half-satanic, half-divine ruler. According to Schramm, Hitler was a demon who had taken control over the German people and who could not be resisted, because demonic men

could be overcome "only by the universe itself, against which they have taken up arms." And he added, quoting Goethe: "Nemo contra deum, nisi deus ipse."[151] The initiated could read these reflections as an allusion to *Kaiser Friedrich* — and, perhaps, an oblique justification of Schramm's own role in the Third Reich. The famous medievalist had welcomed Hitler's seizure of power in 1933,[152] joined the NSDAP six years later, and eventually became, despite a growing detachment from National Socialism, the official keeper of the Wehrmacht's war diary in 1943. In 1939, he had hailed Germany's occupation of Czechoslovakia as a step towards the restoration of the Holy Roman Empire.[153]

Unlike Schramm, Kantorowicz never regarded Hitler as a latter-day Frederick II nor did he applaud the Nazis. The lecture entitled "The Secret Germany" with which he opened the winter semester of 1933 at the University of Frankfurt and his letters to George reveal that for him, the Nazi revolution was not a renewal of Frederick's empire.[154] Nevertheless, for a brief period in 1933, his rejection of National Socialism faltered, and he felt compelled to reassess its significance in the eschatological schemes of the Circle. A critical reexamination of Kantorowicz's position in and changing attitude towards the Third Reich suggests that this moment of doubt reflects more general ambiguities and that recent attempts to portray him as an early, resolute opponent of Nazism need to be qualified.

Kantorowicz, it is true, never tried to ingratiate himself with the brownshirts. But he stayed in Germany, as Peter Schöttler observes, as long as was possible[155] — longer, at any rate, than many Jewish historians of lesser international fame (Ernst Stein, Gustav Mayer, and Hans Rosenberg come to mind), who emigrated shortly after the Nazi takeover.[156] He was not a Hans Rothfels, who in 1938 still considered the anti-Nazi enunciations of emigré historians as high treason,[157] nor was he a more fortunate Albrecht Haushofer, as Hermann Heimpel suggested some time ago.[158] Yet he was not a Siegmund Hellmann either.[159] In his critical, but wait-and-see attitude towards the Nazi regime and his ultrapatriotic views, he rather resembled the Freiburg historian Arnold Berney (1897–1943), whose 1934 biography of Frederick the Great was deeply indebted to the spirit of Stefan George and probably modeled on *Kaiser Friedrich*.[160] Kantorowicz's break with Germany, like Berney's, was a complex, drawn-out process, a gradual abandonment of the "dogma of the nation's dignified future and honor," at the end of which Berney embraced Judaism and Kantorowicz became what he had once so fervently denounced in Halle: an "international" scholar. His role in the Loyalty Oath controversy at Berkeley in 1949/50 impressively illustrates his liberal reorientation in this period.[161] But his conversion in the 1940s, however admirable, should not obscure the fact that in the 1930s, his opposition to National Socialism was qualified.

Even the petition for sabbatical leave from April 1933 betrays, on closer examination, a rather ambiguous response to the Nazi seizure of power. Recent commentators have ignored these ambiguities and simply interpret the letter as a document of Kantorowicz's "moral" rejection of Nazism (Eckhart Grünewald) and his "liberal" determination to defend the "Weimarian principles of tolerance and . . . human dignity" (Ralph Giesey).[162] In fact, Kantorowicz successively deleted most of those passages from earlier drafts of his petition that condemned the infringement of his civil rights ("Angriffe auf Ehre, Würde, Rechtlichkeit," "Privation der simplen bürgerlichen Ehre und Rechte").[163] He also removed all direct references to National Socialism ("durch die jüngsten juden-boykottierenden Massnahmen der NSDAP," "durch die jüngsten Massnahmen der NSDAP").[164] The version of the letter that was eventually sent to the Minister of Education on 20 April 1933, was thus not only stripped of its most liberal elements, but also failed to call the enemy by his name.

No doubt, even in its more cautious phrasing, Kantorowicz's protest against Nazi antisemitism was a proud and courageous gesture — not least because, as a veteran of the First World War, he himself was not actually affected by the antisemitic paragraph 3 of the new *Berufsbeamtengesetz*. At the same time, though, Kantorowicz seemed anxious to stress that he, the fighter against Poles, Spartacists, and *Räte*, had of course a fundamentally positive attitude towards a "national regierten Reich," which had not wavered even in the light of the most recent events. As the biographer of Frederick II, he needed no further proof for his support of a "wieder national gerichteten Deutschland."[165] Rather than illustrating his "democratic" or "liberal" rejection of Nazism, Kantorowicz's letter seems to reflect a deeply felt irritation over the fact that a convinced German patriot like himself should be excluded from the nationally governed *Reich*.[166]

Kantorowicz's letter to George of 4 June 1933 also deserves a fresh look. In many ways, this letter represents his most substantial comment on the "national revolution." It was, overall, a critical — in certain passages a sharply critical — comment. Kantorowicz dreaded the ascendancy of the Nazi ministers (the "Montagnards," as he labeled them) within the new government and called attention to dangerous developments in the foreign political sphere (Austria, the Saar region) as well as the educational sector, where, he feared, *völkisch* mysticism would soon replace sound empirical scholarship. So far, he summarized his impressions, he could see very little that was "wirklich aufbauend." Nevertheless, his observations often betray disappointment rather than disagreement with the recent events in Germany. Kantorowicz seemed to object not so much to the political violence of *Gleichschaltung* or the liquidation of the constitutional state as to the failure of the new rulers to abolish the federal structures of the Weimar Republic completely or to turn the devoted enthusiam of the German youth into something truly productive. And even these expressions of

disappointment he qualified at the end of his letter in a crucial retraction, which Grünewald passes over without comment: "Aber alles das," Kantorowicz wrote, with reference to the defective reforms of the new government, "hat natürlich im Gesamt wenig zu besagen; es sind skurrile Nebenerscheinungen, über denen man die grossen Linien nicht vergessen darf."[167]

The ambiguities detectable in these enunciations reflect Kantorowicz's general state of confusion during the so-called German Spring. On the one hand, he said that felt disgust, shock, pain, and hatred vis-à-vis the Nazis.[168] On the other hand, he remained hesitant, unsure whether their "New Germany" was not at least a harbinger of the "New *Reich*" that the Circle had anticipated for so long. Kantorowicz's ambivalent reaction to the Nazi revolution is perhaps most impressively illustrated by the letter to George from July 1933 which, for a variety of reasons, deserves to be quoted at length:

> "Es möge Deutschland so werden, wie es sich der Meister erträumt hat!" Und wenn das heutige Geschehen nicht bloß die Grimasse jenes Wunschbildes ist, sondern tatsächlich der wahre Weg zu dessen Erfüllung, so möge das alles zum Guten ausschlagen — und dann ist es gleichgültig, ob der einzelne auf diesem Weg mitschreiten kann — vielmehr: darf — oder statt zu jubeln beiseite tritt. "Imperium transcendat hominem," erklärte Friedrich II. und ich wäre der letzte, der hier widerspräche. Verstellen einem die Faten den Zugang zum "Reich" — und als das "Jude oder Farbiger," wie die neue Wortkoppel lautet, ist man von dem allein rassisch fundierten Staat notwendig ausgeschlossen — so wird man den amor fati aufbringen müssen und ihm gemäß die Entschlüsse fassen.[169]

These reflections are remarkable first of all because they substantially qualify the oft-repeated claim that Kantorowicz firmly rejected the Nazi takeover from an early point on.[170] They also call into question Yakov Malkiel's contention that Kantorowicz cherished a "subliminal" yet essential "ancestral Judaism," that conditioned his "studied restraint from extremist positions."[171] What the passage demonstrates is that Kantorowicz was quite ready — at least at this particular juncture — to resign himself to the political extremism of the Nazis, as well as to his own marginalized role in their state.[172] The new distribution of "Herrschaft und Dienst" had to be borne with "amor fati," as long as it was in accordance with the will of the Master. Clearly, Kantorowicz was still reluctant to identify Nazi Germany with George's "New Reich": he prefaced his remarks with a crucial conditional clause and put the word "Reich" in quotes. But, unlike Edgar Salin, who unreservedly condemned the Third Reich as a ghostly caricature of everything they had worked for,[173] he was willing to consider, if only conditionally, the recent events as the true path to the realization of the Germany envisioned by George.[174]

To understand Kantorowicz's confusion in the summer of 1933, we need to take into account that the Master, to whom he felt absolutely committed until the end, welcomed the "German Spring" in many respects and encouraged some of the disciples not to overlook the positive aspects of National Socialism.[175] But we should also consider the affinities between his own visions of *Reich* and rulership and that of the Nazis. The hopes for the renewal of Germany's former European hegemony, the ideal of a racially homogeneous and "sacralized" state, the anticipation of a messianic ruler who would bring about a national rebirth — all that was bound to affect his assessment of a regime that explicitly placed itself in the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire and promised Germany's "awakening," the revision of Versailles,[176] as well as a healthy *Volksgemeinschaft*. The author of *Kaiser Friedrich*, who had glorified the extreme violence and cruelty of his hero's sacral rule in Sicily, was — again, like George — not ready to condemn categorically the brutality of the measures[177] enacted by the new regime: "Brutality based on metaphysics," he told Maurice Bowra in 1934, was "better than brutality for its own sake"[178] — an ominous remark, considering the self-proclaimed redemptive character of Hitler's movement and its pseudoreligious rhetoric.[179]

What may have weakened Kantorowicz's resistance to the new regime most decisively was its promise of a reborn *Reich*. Unlike Johannes Haller and many other medievalists,[180] Kantorowicz, as we have seen, was wary of associating the Third Reich with the First. In November 1933, he implicitly denounced the Nazi state as a new Interregnum.[181] Yet doubts remained. In the unpublished German version of "Laudes Regiae," a study probably begun in 1934 and completed in 1938,[182] Kantorowicz suggested that the fascist states had realized the old yearning for a renewal of the Roman Empire, a yearning, we recall, that pervaded his own Hohenstaufen biography:

> Der Historiker wird heute oft genug gewahr, wie die von ihm ausgegrabenen Riten und Sänge, Sitten und Bräuche des Mittelalters zusammen mit mittelalterlichen Ideologien in das tatsächliche Leben der Staaten übergreifen und wieder Wirklichkeit werden.[183] Und wenn, um nur ein Beispiel zu geben, die Idee einer Renovatio Imperii Romanorum, dank fleissiger Gelehrtenarbeit erst vor wenigen Jahrzehnten entdeckt und ins wache Bewusstsein zurückgerufen, heute in so eigenartiger Form und so überraschend schnell zu politischer Aktualität gelangen konnte, so wird er künftig gefasster sein können, sollten eines Tages die alten Krönungsordines (auf Grund einer bis dahin hoffentlich vorliegenden kritischen Ausgabe[184]) wieder in Kraft treten und dann auch die Laudes regiae wieder erklingen.[185] Einen Ansatz hierzu mag man bereits in dem nationalen Liederbuch des italienischen Unterrichtsministeriums finden, das tatsächlich modernste laudes enthält.[186]

Whether we interpret this passage as an implicit self-critique or as the sign of a more acquiescent attitude towards the Third Reich, Kantorowicz here, much more candidly than in the conclusion to the English version of "Laudes Regiae," seems to acknowledge the problematic points of contact between Nazi propaganda and his own work as a medievalist.

Alongside these points of contact, however, there remain important points of difference, which need to be emphasized again in face of Norman Cantor's recent portrait of Kantorowicz as a Nazi "twin brother" of Schramm. Kantorowicz's 1927 biography clearly was not, as Cantor contends, a "piece of propaganda" for the Third Reich or a "glorification" of Hitler.[187] At the time of its composition, Kantorowicz actually appears to have rejected the Nazi movement. In a letter to Morwitz from September 1926, he condemned Wolters's signing of nationalist and *völkisch* appeals, whereby things that he believed should clearly stand above all parties were being pulled into the dirt of one party.[188] And apart from a brief period of disorientation in the summer of 1933, almost all of Kantorowicz's remarks after the seizure of power betray a critical distance from, if not outspoken opposition to, the new rulers. Marion Countess Dönhoff recalls that in his conversations with her at the time, Kantorowicz invariably mocked the Nazis ("über die Nazis hergezogen ist").[189] Significantly, he denounced Uxkull-Gyllenband's speech "Das revolutionäre Ethos bei Stefan George," which depicted the National Socialist "revolution" as a continuation of George's struggle against the corrosive legacies of nineteenth-century individualism, materialism, and rationalism, and conceived his own lecture "Das geheime Deutschland" as a reply to the pro-Nazi pronouncements by Uxkull and Ernst Bertram.[190] Still, one should be wary of reading this critical distance back into *Kaiser Friedrich*. Theodor Mommsen's remark that the Third Humanism could easily be used as an ideological superstructure of Nazism[191] to some extent also applies to Kantorowicz's work, which could be read — and was read — in a similar way. With its paean to the messianic, autocratic ruler and its glorification of violence in the service of the State, the Hohenstaufen biography, a bestseller at the time,[192] hardly immunized its many readers against Nazi ideology.[193] Goebbels and his censors at the Reichsschrifttumskammer, in any case, deemed it appropriate reading for the "awakened Germany" and allowed a generous reedition in 1936[194] — an indulgence rarely bestowed upon opponents of the regime and defenders of "Weimarian principles," especially if they were Jewish.

A number of signs point to the fact that it was Kantorowicz's reinterpretation of Frederick as a Germanic, "total" ruler that facilitated the Hohenstaufen's integration within the new National Socialist *Geschichtsbild*. Unlike his grandfather Barbarossa or his Prussian namesake, Frederick II, it is true, never belonged to the core of German heroes in the Nazi pantheon. Alfred Rosenberg, for one, continued to attack the southern orien-

tation of his imperial policy at least until 1939,[195] and racial historians such as Oswald Torsten condemned him as an essentially "unvölkisch" emperor.[196] Yet his status in the historiographical literature of the Third Reich — like that of his biographer — was by no means as discredited as Johannes Fried has recently claimed.[197] Altogether, more than fifty monographs, articles, and doctoral theses on Frederick appeared in Germany between 1933 and 1945,[198] including a complete edition and translation of his book on falconry,[199] which Kantorowicz had vigorously called for in 1931 as a national duty all too long neglected by German publishers.[200]

Almost all of these publications presented an image of Frederick that was more or less modeled on Kantorowicz's biography: a supranational, yet ultimately Germanic ruler (Herbert Grundmann),[201] a relentless antagonist of the pope and "struggler for the Reich" (H. Böhmer),[202] who had consolidated royal power in Germany as well as German hegemony in Europe (Paul Kirn).[203] Even certified Nazi historians like Erich Maschke and Karl Ipser[204] explicitly defended the emperor against the traditional charges to the effect that he was Latin rather than German and that he had neglected to conquer important *Lebensraum* in Eastern Europe.[205] The fact that Maschke's apologia for Frederick, together with a minibiography by Hampe, appeared in Rosenberg's *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* (May 1941),[206] the official theoretical organ of the NSDAP, reflected the positive reassessment of the Hohenstaufen's Imperial policy by the party ideologists after the beginning of the Second World War, when Frederick II's and Barbarossa's trans-European "deutscher Herrschaftsraum" (Maschke) came to serve as a historical model for Hitler's "europäische Großraumordnung." Two years later, the same journal published an article entitled "Kaiser Friedrich II. und die Juden." Its author, H. F. Anders, vehemently rebutted recent attempts to portray Frederick as a philosemite, arguing, in terms strongly reminiscent of *Kaiser Friedrich*, that far from granting them special treatment, Frederick had ruthlessly utilized the Jews of Sicily for his state.[207]

For an alleged persona non grata, Kantorowicz remained remarkably present in the literature on Frederick published after 1933. His name appeared not only in the works of Hampe, Baethgen, and Schramm, but also in those of Maschke and Ipser. While Maschke cited him — extensively — in the footnotes of his 1943 Hohenstaufen book[208] (with an asterisk, to denote the "non-Aryan" character of his source), Ipser paraphrased entire paragraphs from *Kaiser Friedrich*, including the famous concluding evocation of the greatest and as yet unredeemed Frederick, "den sein Volk weder faßte noch füllte."[209] Considering the popularity of Kantorowicz's book, one can safely assume that most of Ipser's readers were able to identify the intertextual reference of the following passage: "Der größte Friedrich ist nunmehr erlöst . . . Lange Zeit war er ein Fremder gewesen, aber heute hat ihn sein Volk verstanden und er ist ganz

einer der Unseren geworden. Sein Werk ist gesichert und hat in allem strahlende Erfüllung gefunden durch Adolf Hitler."[210]

Although his foreign policy was directed eastward rather than southward, there is some evidence that Hitler considered himself as the inheritor of Frederick's *Reich* and its European mission. Germany's claim to world domination, Hitler declared in February 1942, could only be based on the history of the Holy Roman Empire; the history of the *Reich*[211] was the most tremendous epic the world had ever witnessed: "Diese Kühnheit, wenn man sich vorstellt, wie oft die Kerle über die Alpen geritten sind. Die Männer haben ein Format gehabt! Von Sizilien aus sogar haben sie regiert!"[212] His table talk reveals that Hitler also admired Frederick as a great antagonist of the Catholic Church.[213] His Ghibelline fascination with the Hohenstaufen appears to have been well known among his subordinates.[214] On New Year's Day 1941, Joachim von Ribbentrop presented him with a richly detailed model construction (in 1:50 scale) of Frederick's most famous castle, the Castel del Monte.[215] Martin Bormann cited a remark by Frederick in the *Sächsische Weltchronik* to demonstrate to his Führer the venerable medieval roots of the Nazis' "German greeting."[216] On reading *Kaiser Friedrich* in his Spandau prison cell, Albert Speer recalled a visit to Hitler in the summer of 1939:

> Abends das Buch von Kantorowicz: *Kaiser Friedrich II.* abgeschlossen. Ich erinnerte mich der Reise, die ich auf seinen Spuren wenige Monate vor Kriegsausbruch durch Sizilien und Apulien unternommen hatte. Zusammen mit meiner Frau besuchte ich die Schlösser, Festungen und Kapellen aus der Zeit des großen Hohenstaufen. Mit einiger Absicht schien die faschistische Regierung diese Denkmale der Erinnerung an den bedeutenden Deutschen verwahrlosen und verfallen zu lassen. Auch die berühmte Grabstätte Friedrichs II. im Dom von Palermo machte einen ungepflegten Eindruck; Überreste von Papier und Zigaretten lagen allenthalben herum. Zurückgekehrt, schlug ich Hitler vor, die Gebeine Friedrichs II. in dem schönen, antiken Marmorsarkophag unter dem großartigen Tabernakel in unsere Berliner "Soldatenhalle" zu verlegen. Der Duce sei vielleicht nicht unglücklich, wenn er diese Mahnung an eine Schwächeperiode des italienischen Imperiums außer Landes wisse. Außerdem habe er Göring doch immerhin den viel wertvolleren Sterzinger Altar geschenkt.
> Hitler hörte wohlwollend lächelnd zu.[217]

Hitler's enthusiasm for Frederick II was shared by a number of high-ranking officials in the Nazi party as well as the Wehrmacht. One of the sources for the curious fascination with the Hohenstaufen in these circles seems to have been Kantorowicz's biography. Both Göring and Himmler admired the book.[218] Hans Speidel, general staff chief of Heeresgruppe B under Rommel, found it "tief bewegend."[219] Wilhelm Canaris, head of the

German military intelligence and, like Speidel, a member of the resistance against Hitler, chose *Kaiser Friedrich* as his final reading at Flossenbürg concentration camp, where he was executed by the SS on April 1945.[220] The chief of the Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung of the Supreme Command, General Walther Scherff, continued to read it during the war in the Führer's headquarters. When Hitler caught him immersed in *Kaiser Friedrich*, Scherff expected to be reprimanded, but Hitler merely told him that he had read the book twice.[221]

Unlike some of his contemporary admirers, Kantorowicz was keenly aware of the fact that *Kaiser Friedrich* had become a "fascist classic."[222] He was reluctant to allow a reedition in postwar Germany, fearing that the book might revive old nationalist myths. According to Edgar Salin, Kantorowicz was of the opinion "daß das Buch, in der Hochstimmung der Zwanziger Jahre geschrieben, mit all seinen Hoffnungen auf den Sieg des Geheimen Deutschland und auf die Erneuerung des deutschen Volkes durch den Blick auf seinen größten Kaiser, — daß dieses Buch heute fehl am Platze sei und vielleicht sogar antiquierte Nationalismen neu belebe."[223] When in April 1963, shortly before his death, he finally relented and agreed to a photomechanical reproduction — omitting the *Vorbemerkung* about the emperors and heroes of the Secret Germany,[224] but keeping the dedication to his friend Woldemar Uxkull-Gyllenband — he regretted his decision almost immediately, remarking: "Man sollte halt ein Buch, das bei Himmler auf dem Nachttisch lag und das Göring an Mussolini mit Widmung verschenkte, in völlige Vergessenheit geraten lassen."[225]

Kantorowicz's more analytical approach to medieval political theology in his later studies, notably *The King's Two Bodies* (1957),[226] was an implicit recantation of the earlier myth-making in *Kaiser Friedrich*, where he had used the acclamations of Frederick in oder to acclaim, in his turn, a new type of ruler who would bring to an end the "unkaiserliche Zeit" in which Germany found itself in the 1920s, restore the lost glory of the *Reich* and reestablish a sacral form of *Herrschaft*.[227] As early as 1943, he had attempted a critical reassessment of the nationalist and antiliberal ideals that had informed his Hohenstaufen biography. In a series of lectures for the Army Special Training Program at Berkeley, Kantorowicz gave American officers a crash course in German history from Charlemagne to Hitler, in which he exposed the political prophecies of a coming national redeemer and a reborn German Reich, "far more august and all-comprising than all the national states of Europe," as proto-fascist.[228]

To apply this label to *Kaiser Friedrich*, or indeed to the palingenetic ideas circulating in the George Circle during the 1920s, would be a simplistic *reductio ad unum*.[229] But it would be no less simplistic to read the *Reichsidee* developed in the work as indicative of the Circle's cosmopolitanism or to interpret its notion of *Herrschaft* as compatible with a liberal, humanist outlook. Kantorowicz's 1927 biography of Frederick II and his

reaction to the Nazi seizure of power six years later demonstrate both the distance and the proximity between George's imagined realm and the *Reich* established by Hitler. The empire and its ruler envisioned in *Kaiser Friedrich* contain numerous facets that are incommensurable with the ideology of National Socialism, and in comparison to the other members of the George Circle, Kantorowicz must be considered an outspoken critic of the Third Reich. This does not make him the principal witness, however, of the Circle's "aesthetic resistance" to the brownshirts, a status that his hagiographers have recently tried to bestow on him;[230] nor should it occlude the deeply illiberal and antihumanist notions of Reich and rulership underlying his biography — notions that were endemic in the Circle and that converged, in a number of important ways, with those of the Nazis. More than anything else, the book and its author reveal the deep ambiguities of the hopes entertained by Stefan George and his followers for the political and cultural renewal of Germany.

Notes

[1] See Eckhart Grünewald, *Ernst Kantorowicz und Stefan George: Beiträge zur Biographie des Historikers bis zum Jahre 1938 und zu seinem Jugendwerk "Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite"* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982); Alain Boureau, *Kantorowicz: Histoires d'un historien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), translated into English by Stephen G. Nichols and Gabrielle M. Spiegel as *Kantorowicz: Stories of a Historian* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001), and translated into German by Annette Holoch as *Kantorowicz: Geschichten eines Historikers* (Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 1992); Kay Schiller, *"Gelehrte Gegenwelten": Über humanistische Leitbilder im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2000); and Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister: Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: Beck, 2009).

[2] Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 324; Yakov Malkiel, "Ernst Kantorowicz," in *On Four Modern Humanists: Hofmannsthal, Gundolf, Curtius, Kantorowicz*, ed. Arthur R. Evans, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970), 146–219; Michael Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer? Zur Wirkung Stefan Georges im "Dritten Reich"* (Marburg: Tectum, 1995), 123–8; and Ralph E. Giesey, "Ernst H. Kantorowicz: Scholarly Triumphs and Academic Travails in Weimar Germany and the United States," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 30 (1985): 191–202; here, 198.

[3] See, e.g., Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Das Mittelalter als Waffe: Ernst H. Kantorowicz' *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* in den politischen Kontroversen der Weimarer Republik," in *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeichen des Historismus: Studien zu Problemgeschichten der Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 163–215; here, 212.

[4] Thomas Karlauf, *Stefan George: Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Blessing, 2007), 562; and Joseph Mali, "Ernst H. Kantorowicz: History as Mythenschau," *History of Political Thought* 18, no. 4 (1997): 579–603.

[5] Johannes Fried, "Ernst Kantorowicz and Postwar Historiography: German and European Perspectives," in *Ernst Kantorowicz: Erträge der Doppeltagung*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Johannes Fried (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997), 180–201; here, 200; Giesey, "Scholarly Triumphs," 191. See also Roberto delle Donne, "Nachwort," in Boureau, *Geschichten eines Historikers*, 151–73; here, 167.

[6] David Abulafia, "Kantorowicz, Frederick II and England," in Benson and Fried, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 124–43, especially 125 and 132. See also Marina Valensise, "Ernst Kantorowicz," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 101 (1989): 195–221; here, 203; and Carl Landauer, "Ernst Kantorowicz and the Sacralization of the Past," *Central European History* 27, no. 1 (1994): 1–25; here, 7.

[7] See Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 259, and Landauer, "Sacralization of the Past," 8–10.

[8] See Delle Donne, "Nachwort," 159–66; Peter Schöttler, "Ernst Kantorowicz in Frankreich," in Benson and Fried, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 144–61; and Dietrich Kuhlgatz, "Verehrung und Isolation: Zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der Biographie Friedrichs II. von Ernst Kantorowicz," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 43 (1995): 736–46, especially 741–6. Since 1980, the "Textband" of *Kaiser Friedrich* has gone through no less than thirteen editions.

[9] See Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, "Von der Macht der Bilder: Überlegungen zu Ernst H. Kantorowicz' Werk *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*," in *Geschichtskörper: Zur Aktualität von Ernst H. Kantorowicz*, ed. Wolfgang Ernst and Cornelia Vismann (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1998), 13–29, especially 16–17, 25; Delle Donne, "Nachwort," 169–71; Boureau, *Histoires d'un historien*, 9–10; Mali, "Ernst H. Kantorowicz"; and Joseph Mali, *Mythistory: The Making of a Modern Historiography* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003), 187–228.

[10] See Robert Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and his Circle* (Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 2002), 664–70.

[11] Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), 95.

[12] Ernst Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1927) (hereafter: *KFZ*), Vorbemerkung.

[13] Some of the investigations on which the present chapter relies were first published under the title "'In This Time without Emperors': The Politics of Ernst Kantorowicz's *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* Reconsidered," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000): 187–242.

[14] E. Salin to S. George, 10 September 1933, StGA.

[15] See, e.g., Malkiel, "Ernst Kantorowicz," 177; and Andrew L. Yarrow, "Humanism and Deutschtum: The Origins, Development, and Consequences of the Politics of Poetry in the George-Kreis," *The Germanic Review* 58, no.1 (Winter 1983): 1–11; here, 3 and 4.

[16] On the *Drang nach Süden* as a topos in German literature, see Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Das klassische Land. Wandlungen der Italiensehnsucht* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1927); Hildegard Wiegel, ed., *Italiensehnsucht. Kunsthistorische Aspekte*

eines Topos (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2004); Dieter Richter, *Der Süden. Geschichte einer Himmelsrichtung* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2009).

[17] Ernst Morwitz, *Kommentar zu dem Werk Stefan Georges* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1960), 230.

[18] Edgar Salin remarked with regard to George's active involvement in the proofreading of *Kaiser Friedrich*: "Wer Ohren hat zu hören, wird in mancher Wendung, in manchem Satz Georges eigene Stimme vernehmen": Edgar Salin, *Ernst Kantorowicz, 1895–1963* (Basel: privately printed, 1963), 5. See also Ludwig Thormaehlen, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George* (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell, 1962), 227–8; Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 57–80, 149–57; Norton, *Secret Germany*, 664–70; and Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 549–53, 558–62.

[19] *KFZ*, 75, 353–5.

[20] Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer?*, 144; Landauer, "Sacralization of the Past," 7. Johannes Fried, similarly, refers to George's Francophilia as a quasi-transhistorical disposition and potential bridle to Kantorowicz's nationalism: see his "Einleitung" in Ernst Kantorowicz, *Götter in Uniform: Studien zur Entwicklung des abendländischen Königtums*, ed. Eckhart Grünewald and Ulrich Raulff (Stuttgart: A. Francke, 1998), 7–45; here, 7–8; Manfred Riedel, *Geheimes Deutschland: Stefan George und die Gebrüder Stauffenberg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2006), 180; Bruno Pieger and Bertram Schefold, eds, *Stefan George: Dichtung — Ethos — Staat: Denkbilder für ein geheimes europäisches Deutschland* (Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2010), similarly, present George and his followers as "Verfechter eines noch verborgenen europäischen Deutschlands."

[21] Friedrich Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat: Studien zur Genesis des deutschen Nationalstaates* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1908).

[22] See E. Kantorowicz to George, 7 September 1925 and 27 July 1930, StGA.

[23] See Carola Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung: Das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890–1933* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997), 284, 655. Kantorowicz himself was probably never very close to Wolters, yet Uxkull, Kommerell, Gothein, and Stein, who all more or less shared Wolters's nationalist ideas, represented his peer group in the Circle. Fried, "Einleitung," 15, 20–4, places Kantorowicz and his Hohenstaufen biography within Gundolf's sphere of influence, ignoring the growing distance between both men caused first by the Fine affair and then by Gundolf's alienation from George, which began in 1920 and became irreversible in 1926. See Kantorowicz's chilly retrospective comment on his correspondence with Gundolf in the 1920s: "denn ausser einigen groben Briefen hat der Gdf [i.e., Gundolf] keine von mir": E. Kantorowicz to George, 2 December 1931, StGA. As early as 1920, we see Kantorowicz comparing Gundolf's formulaic approach unfavourably with George's ability to convince without being dogmatic (*ohne Apodiktizität*): E. Kantorowicz to J. von Kahler, 6 November 1920, StGA.

[24] See Salin, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 2–3.

[25] Berthold Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George, 1902–1931* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1961), 50–1 (11 January, 1920): "wesenhafte deutsche heroische Erscheinung."

[26] *GA*, 6/7:22–23. See also Klaus Landfried, *Stefan George: Politik des Unpolitischen* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1975), 69–75.
[27] *GA*, 9:57. This interpretation of George's poem "Burg Falkenstein" relies on the commentary in Morwitz, *Kommentar zu dem Werk,* 436–9.
[28] Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 77. See also Edith Landmann, *Stefan George und die Griechen: Idee einer neuen Ethik* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1971), 130.
[29] George's "Karlen- und Ottonen-plan" alluded to this program of renewal.
[30] *KFZ*, 377: "römischer Geist."
[31] *GA*, 8:43: "Eur kostbar tierhaft kindhaft blut verdirbt / Wenn ihrs nicht mischt im reich von korn und wein."
[32] *KFZ*, 355.
[33] *KFZ*, 75: "das erwachende junge Deutschland."
[34] *KFZ*, 377: "ein beginnendes Schaffen der deutschen Eigenform auch im Staate . . . ein erstes Festhalten des Deutschen im Deutschen selbst und das erste Niederlegen des zumindest für die Sprache schon überflüssig gewordenen römischen Gerüsts."
[35] Max Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik: Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, Hölderlin*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1942), 11–13.
[36] "Das Antike, Rom bedeutete kein Endziel . . ., sondern einen Weg, um den Deutschen zu sich selbst, zur Sichtbarmachung, zur Verkörperung seines Geistes zu bringen": Berthold Vallentin, *Winckelmann* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1931), 214; quoted in *Der George-Kreis: Eine Auswahl aus seinen Schriften*, ed. Georg Peter Landmann, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), 369. Ernst Bertram, similarly, considered the cultural inheritance of Greek antiquity primarily as a vehicle for the self-rejuvenation of the German *Volk*: Ernst Bertram, *Deutsche Gestalten* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1934), 254; quoted in Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer?*, 56.
[37] *KFZ*, 75: "Nicht daß um ihretwillen die Germanen ihr Eigenstes hergeben oder einbüßen sollten: ihr eigenstes Bestes schlossen jene Mächte eher ein als aus." In the same context, Kantorowicz mentioned the *Nibelungenlied*, the Middle High German poem of the Hohenstaufen period that, ever since Herder, had been regarded as one of the first examples of a truly "Germanic" literature: *KFZ*, 75.
[38] *KFZ*, 605–6.
[39] See Hans Belting, "Images in History and Images of History," in Benson and Fried, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 94–103; here, 96. But cf. Robert Lerner, "Ernst Kantorowicz and Theodor E. Mommsen," in *An Interrupted Past: German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States After 1933*, ed. Harmut Lehmann and James J. Sheehan (Washington: German Historical Institute / Cambridge UP, 1991), 188–205; here, 192n9.
[40] For the notion of Ghibellinism in nineteenth-century German historiography and literature, see Heinz Gollwitzer, "Zur Auffassung der mittelalterlichen Kaiserpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert: Eine ideologie- und wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Nachlese," in *Dauer und Wandel in der Geschichte: Aspekte europäischer*

Vergangenheit; Festgabe für Kurt von Raumer, ed. Rudolf Vierhaus and Manfred Botzenhart (Münster: Aschendorff, 1966), 483–512.

[41] See Gunther Mai, *Das Kyffhäuser-Denkmal 1896–1996. Ein nationales Monument im europäischen Kontext* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1997).

[42] Friedrich Schiller, "Der Graf von Habsburg," *Schillers Werke. Nationalausgabe*, ed. Julius Petersen et al. (Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1943–), vol. 2.1, 277. Schiller's expression — which actually referred to the period of the Great Interregnum (1254–1273) — became proverbial in the nineteenth century. Kantorowicz alludes to it with his reference to an "unkaiserliche Zeit" in the Vorbermerkung to *Kaiser Friedrich*. On the Kyffhäuser myth, see Franz Kampers, *Die deutsche Kaiseridee in Prophetie und Sage*, 2nd ed. (Aalen: Scientia Verlag 1969); Franz G. Schultheiß, *Die deutsche Volkssage vom Fortleben und der Wiederkehr Friedrichs II. = Historische Studien*, vol. 94 (Berlin: E. Ebering 1911); Albrecht Timm, "Der Kyffhäuser im deutschen Geschichtsbild," *Historisch-Politische Hefte der Ranke Gesellschaft* 3 (1961): 3–31; Frank Shaw, "Friedrich II as the 'Last Emperor,'" *German History*, vol. 19, 3 (2001): 321–39; and Camilla G. Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser. Bilder eines nationalen Mythos im 19. Jahrhundert = Atlas. Bonner Beiräge zur Kunstgeschichte* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 2006).

[43] Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte der preußischen Politik*, 14 vols. (Leipzig: Verlag Veit, 1855–86), part 1, 1:4, 5, 14; quoted in Wolfgang Hardtwig, "Von Preußens Aufgabe in Deutschland zu Deutschlands Aufgabe in der Welt: Liberalismus und borussianisches Geschichtsbild zwischen Revolution und Imperialismus," *Historische Zeitschrift* 231, no.2 (1980): 265–324; here, 297– 98.

[44] See Gollwitzer, "Zur Auffassung der mittelalterlichen Kaiserpolitik," 506; Hardtwig, "Von Preußens Aufgabe in Deutschland," 297–304; Elisabeth Fehrenbach, *Wandlungen des deutschen Kaisergedankens 1871–1918* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1969), 160–62; and Gottfried Koch, "Die mittelalterliche Kaiserpolitik im Spiegel der bürgerlichen deutschen Historiographie des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 10 (1962): 1837–70; here, 1858–62. For a recent revival of Ghibelline nostalgia, see Humbert Fink, *Ich bin der Herr der Welt: Friedrich II., der Staufer* (Munich: List, 1986), 7–8.

[45] Ernst Kantorowicz, "Grenzen, Möglichkeiten und Aufgaben der Darstellung mittelalterlicher Geschichte," 1930, ed. Eckhart Grünewald, *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* l (1994):104–25; here, 122, 108: "Und [Sybel's] kleindeutscher Standpunkt in der berühmten Kontroverse mit Ficker . . . ist auch nicht nach *meinem* Geschmack."

[46] See Albert Brackmann, "Der Streit um die deutsche Kaiserpolitik des Mittelalters," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1941), 25–38, previously published in *Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte* 43 (1929).

[47] Kantorowicz's derisive reference to the "dünne politische Pragmatik" of those historians who dissected "das volle lebendige Bild" of Frederick (*KFZ*, 71) was

arguably an allusion to von Below; see Herbert Grundmann's review, "*Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*," *Frankfurter Zeitung* (Literaturblatt), 30 April 1933, repr. in *Stupor Mundi: Zur Geschichte Friedrichs II. von Hohenstaufen*, ed. Günther Wolf (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), 103–8; here, 105.

[48] Hampe merely stated the medievalists' *opinio communis* when he declared that Frederick had "so gar nichts von dem deutschen Wesen angenommen": Karl Hampe, "Kaiser Friedrich II.," *Historische Zeitschrift* 83 (1899): 1–42; here, 11.

[49] See Johannes Haller, *Die Epochen der deutschen Geschichte* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1940), 89.

[50] *KFZ*, 377.

[51] *KFZ*, 541–3, 477.

[52] Nietzsche conceived of Frederick as a paradigmatically anti-Catholic figure; see, e.g., Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967–88), vol. 6, 340.

[53] Fleckenstein rightly remarks that both the spirit of Stefan George and Heinrich von Treitschke are detectable in *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*: Josef Fleckenstein, "Ernst Kantorowicz zum Gedächtnis," *Frankfurter Universitätsreden* 34 (1964): 11–27, repr. in Josef Fleckenstein, *Ordnungen und formende Krafte des Mittelalters: Ausgewahlte* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 508–21, especially 512. On Kantorowicz's fiercely anti-Catholic stance, see also Landauer, "Sacralization of the Past," 10–11.

[54] Otto von Bismarck, *Die gesammelten Werke*, 15 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1924–35), 11:289–90; quoted in Gordon A. Craig, *Germany, 1866–1945* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978), 71–2.

[55] *KFZ*, 496 (with reference to Gregory IX) and 566 (Konrad von Hochstaden).

[56] See Albert Brackmann, "*Kaiser Friedrich II. in 'mythischer Schau,'" Historische Zeitschrift* 140, no. 3 (1929): 534–49, repr. in Wolf, *Stupor Mundi*, 5–22, esp. 7–11.

[57] See *KFZ*, 469–70. Kantorowicz here again alluded to Nietzsche, who had identified the meaning of the Renaissance with the opportunity of Cesare Borgia's secularisation of the Church from within; the quote in *KFZ*, 470 ("von überirdischem Reiz") is taken directly from the *Antichrist*: see Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*, in Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 6, 250–51. In his lecture on the "German Papacy," Kantorowicz reiterated this "Nietzschesche Vision eines 'Cesare Borgia als Papst'": Ernst Kantorowicz, "Deutsches Papsttum," *Castrum Peregrini*, no. 7 (1953): 7–24; here, 12.

[58] E. Kantorowicz, "Deutsches Papsttum," 21–4.

[59] Kantorowicz, "Deutsches Papsttum,"12, 23.

[60] "Deutsches Papsttum" indeed could be read as an elaborate variation on a theme from Wolters's "Blättergeschichte": see especially Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst: Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1930), 549.

[61] As is argued by Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 130–5, and Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer?*, 123–7.
[62] On Kantorowicz's Posen background, see Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 4–18, and Adam Labuda, "Ein Posener Itinerar zu Kantorowicz," in Ernst and Vismann, *Geschichtskörper*, 73–91, as well as Jerzy Strzelczyk, ed., *Ernst Kantorowicz (1895–1963): Soziales Milieu und wissenschaftliche Relevanz*, Vorträge des Symposiums am Institut für Geschichte der Adam-Mickiewicz-Universität, Poznan, 23–24 November 1995 (Poznan: Instytut historii UAM, 1996), esp. 65–90.
[63] See Walter Breslauer, "Jews of the City of Posen One Hundred Years Ago," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 8 (1963): 229–37.
[64] Wilhelm II was especially intrigued by Frederick II with whom he felt an elective affinity, as reported by Karl Hampe, *Kaiser Friedrich II. in der Auffassung der Nachwelt* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1925), 74–5. See also Robert Zedlitz-Trützschler, *Zwölf Jahre am deutschen Kaiserhof*, 5th ed. (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1924), 130; and Reinhold Schneider, *Verhüllter Tag: Bekenntnis eines Lebens*, 6th ed. (Cologne: J. Hegner, 1962), 108.
[65] See Jan Skuratowicz, "Die wilhelminische Architektur in Posen," in *Preußen in der Provinz: Beiträge zum I. Deutsch-Polnischen Historikerkolloquium*, ed. Peter Nitsche (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), 94–104; here, 100–101.
[66] Hitler, who entertained similar Ghibelline visions, as we shall see, turned the tower chapel into his private office after the Polish campaign in September 1939: see Skuratowicz, "Wilhelminische Architektur," 104.
[67] See Labuda, "Posener Itinerar," 89.
[68] See Kantorowicz's letter to the Board of Trustees of Frankfurt University, 15 April 1933, in which he mentions his joining of the Deutsche Volkswehr in order to ward off "polnische Übergriffe in Posen": Leo Baeck Institute, Ernst Kantorowicz Collection, no. AR 7216 (henceforth LBI-EK), Box 5, Folder 5. See also Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 27–8.
[69] See Koch, "Die mittelalterliche Kaiserpolitik," 1860–62; and Hans Schleier, *Die bürgerliche deutsche Geschichtsschreibung der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975), 88–90.
[70] Karl Hampe, *Der Zug nach dem Osten: Die kolonisatorische Großtat des deutschen Volkes im Mittelalter* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1921).
[71] See Georg von Below, *Die italienische Kaiserpolitik des Deutschen Mittelalters* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1927), 64–5, 101–3; and Fritz Kern, "Der deutsche Staat und die Politik des Römerzuges," in Josef Ahlhaus et al, *Aus Politik und Geschichte: Gedächtnisschrift für Georg von Below* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1928), 32–74; here, 68.
[72] See Brackmann, "Der Streit," 29; and Albert Brackmann, "Die Ostpolitik Ottos des Großen," *Historische Zeitschrift* 134, no. 2 (1926): 242–56.
[73] See *KFZ*, 87: "es bestand die Gefahr, daß Preußen ein Lehensland der römischen Kurie würde."
[74] See Grundmann, "*Friedrich II.*," *Stupor Mundi*, 133.

[75] *KFZ*, 87–8. Brackmann presented an even stronger case for Frederick's active involvement in the East: Albert Brackmann, "*Kaiser Friedrich II.*," in *Gestalter der deutschen Vergangenheit*, ed. Peter Rohden (Potsdam: Sanssouci, 1937), 141–56, repr. in Wolf, *Stupor Mundi*, 178–93; here. 186.
[76] *KFZ*, 250.
[77] See Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 81. These Ghibelline dimensions of *Kaiser Friedrich* are completely overlooked by Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 533, who reads Kantorowicz's biography as a critique of the "Missbrauch der staufischen Kaisersage durch die Hohenzollern" and the "lächerliche Gleichsetzung des greisen Barbarossa mit dem greisen Barbablanca."
[78] Johannes Haller, *Das altdeutsche Kaisertum* (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1926), 240.
[79] Hampe, "Kaiser Friedrich II.," 33–4: "Zerfall der Centralgewalt in Deutschland."
[80] *KFZ*, 75. See also *KFZ*, 353: "die letzte Vollendung des alten Reiches der Deutschen."
[81] *KFZ*, 350: "staatliche Intensivierung nach sizilischem Vorbild." See *KFZ*, 376–77, 381, where Kantorowicz suggests that the highly centralized Sicilian kingdom served as a blueprint for Frederick's plans regarding Germany. Brackmann, again, argued along very similar lines in 1937: see Brackmann, "Kaiser Friedrich II.," in *Stupor Mundi*, 189.
[82] *KFZ*, 74, 351, 197, 354.
[83] It is revealing, in this context, that Kantorowicz included Bismarck among the Guelf heroes, positing a genealogical line from Henry the Lion to "dem ungekrönten Gründer des Nordreiches . . . dem erhabensten dieser Riesen, der als Schicksal den Welfen so nahesteht": *KFZ*, 65.
[84] Perhaps this was a punning allusion to Wilhelm I's Ghibelline sobriquet "Barbablanca."
[85] *KFZ*, 632. Both Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 80; and Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 553, identify "des Kaisers Volk" with the George Circle. Grünewald, similarly, interprets Kantorowicz's *amor patriae* in the Halle speech as love for the Secret Germany: Eckhart Grünewald, "Sanctus amor patriae dat animum — ein Wahlspruch des George-Kreises?," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* l (1994): 89–103, esp. 101–3. *Kaiser Friedrich,* however, was not just an esoteric "Geistbuch," but also a patriotic appeal to the German people. It was, as Kantorowicz later told Salin, full of hopes both for the victory of the Secret Germany *and* for the "Erneuerung des deutschen Volkes durch den Blick auf seinen grössten Kaiser": Salin, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 9.
[86] Boureau, *Histoires d'un historien*, 41.
[87] Kantorowicz, "Grenzen," 124–5.
[88] For the antirepublican implications of the *Reichsidee*, see Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik: Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933* (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1962), 280–306.

[89] See *KFZ*, 400.

[90] *KFZ*, 620: "Weder haben sie [i.e., the Germans] jemals den blutgetränkten Adler gereinigt noch jemals der sizilischen die deutsche Vesper folgen lassen." The repeated use of *jemals* highlights the presentist implications of these lines. According to a folk legend, an eagle had trailed his wing in the blood of the dead Konradin and, thus stained, soared again to heaven. Kantorowicz combined this image of the unavenged Hohenstaufen with the notion of a German Vespers. In a similarly militant spirit, Kommerell said of Germany: "Das Land auf das der Adler Gottes sich herabließ, kennt kein Recht neben dem seinen, und wer seine Weihe leugnet, ist nicht nur sein, sondern des Gottes Widersacher": Max Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer*, 477.

[91] Kantorowicz discussed the iconological parallels between the two birds in his article "Zu den Rechtsgrundlagen der Kaisersage," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 13 (1957): 115–50, repr. in Ernst Kantorowicz, *Selected Studies* (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1965), 284–307, esp. 306.

[92] *KFZ*, 389–90, 74, and 89: "Deutschland sei überall da, wo der römische Kaiser mit einigen Fürsten zusammenkomme, hieß der . . . Grundsatz Friedrichs II., mit dem er andererseits auch gerade dartat, daß das ganze Imperium, nicht nur die Lande nördlich der Alpen auch deutsch sein könnte."

[93] For the ultimately imperialist concerns underlying the historiographical representations of the *Reichsidee*, see Bernd Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges: Die deutsche Geschichte in der Historiographie zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Beck, 1980), 83.

[94] See Abulafia, "Kantorowicz, Frederick II and England," 132; Landauer, "Sacralization of the Past," 7–8.

[95] *KFZ*, 353, 522.

[96] Note that at the end of the last quotation, Kantorowicz implicitly distinguishes Frederick's "Genossenschafts-Staat" from the League of Nations. His contempt for the latter institution is evident in "Deutsches Papsttum," 8: "Vor einem . . . blieb das Papsttum immer bewahrt: herabzusinken zu einer Art Völkerbundspräsidentschaft, die den Völkern nach dem ehernen Gesetz alphabetischer Reihenfolge zufällt."

[97] See Heinrich August Winkler, *The Long Shadow of the Reich: Weighing Up German History*, The German Historical Institute 2001 Annual Lecture (London: German Historical Institute, 2002).

[98] See Robert Holtzmann, "Der Weltherrschaftsgedanke des mittelalterlichen Kaisertums und die Souveränität der europäischen Staaten," *Historische Zeitschrift* 159, no. 2 (1939): 251–64, esp. 263–4.

[99] This was the heading of his book's penultimate chapter.

[100] *KFZ*, 17 and 12. See also *KFZ*, 523–4, where Kantorowicz emphasizes the superiority of Frederick's "Reichsgeblüt" over the lineage of other European rulers.

[101] *KFZ*, 444. Haller had compared Frederick's father Henry VI to Napoleon in his "Kaiser Heinrich VI.," *Historische Zeitschrift* 113 (1914): 473–509; here, 477.

[102] See Paul de Lagarde, "Die nächsten Pflichten deutscher Politik" (1886), *Deutsche Schriften*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1920), 440–2. George greatly admired Lagarde: see E. Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper 1963), 50. On the genealogy of the *Mitteleuropaidee,* see H. Meier, "Zur Europa-Ideologie im 19. Jahrhundert (de Lagarde, Frantz)," in *Studien über die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. Joachim Streisand (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1965), 2:25–40.

[103] See Friedrich Naumann, *Mitteleuropa* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1915), 40–2, where Naumann invokes the Holy Roman Empire as a model for *Mitteleuropa*.

[104] See Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken*, 292–7; and Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges*, 82–5.

[105] *KFZ*, 349, 520.

[106] See Eric Laurent's comment on the imperialist implications of Kantorowicz's "universalism" in *Tumult: Schriften zur Verkehrswissenschaft* 16 (1992): 94–108, esp. 103. According to Blandine Kriegel, remnants of Kantorowicz's "Imperial obsession" are still detectable in *The King's Two Bodies* (107): Blandine Kriegel, *La politique de la raison* (Paris: Payot, 1994), xiv–xviii.

[107] Marc Bloch, "The Empire and the Idea of the Empire under the Hohenstaufen," Lectures delivered at Strasbourg in the academic year 1927–28, in *Land and Work in Medieval Europe: Selected Papers by Marc Bloch*, trans. J. E. Anderson (London: Routledge, 1967), 41. For the expansionist dimensions of the *Reichsidee*, see Winkler, *The Long Shadow of the Reich*.

[108] Marc Bloch, "Bulletin Historique: Histoire d'Allemagne (Moyen Age)," *Revue historique* 158 (1928): 108–58; here, 157. Bloch mockingly mentioned Kantorowicz's anglophobic description of Otto the Welf in this context.

[109] Johann Gustav Droysen, *Politische Schriften*, ed. Felix Gilbert (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1933), 62–3; quoted in Hardtwig, "Von Preußens Aufgabe in Deutschland," 300.

[110] See Hardtwig, "Von Preußens Aufgabe in Deutschland," 299, 312.

[111] *KFZ*, 247: "der intoleranteste Kaiser, den das Abendland überhaupt hervorgebracht hat."

[112] See Abulafia, "Kantorowicz and Frederick II," 199. Burckhardt had already remarked in the *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*: "Man möge nur keine liberalen Sympathien mit diesem großen Hohenstaufen haben!" an allusion, Peter Ganz believes, to von Raumer: Jacob Burckhardt, *Über das Studium der Geschichte*, ed. Peter Ganz (Munich: Beck 1982), 508–9.

[113] See *KFZ*, 445, 442, 596–97.

[114] *KFZ*, 123. See Kommerell, *Gespräche*, 33: "Volk ist nur stoff."

[115] *KFZ*, 232, 233, 444. The first section of Burckhardt's book was entitled "Der Staat als Kunstwerk."

[116] *KFZ*, 111 and 245. The "poisonous" opponents of Frederick's state to whom Kantorowicz referred here were the Jewish and Saracen minorities.

[117] Kantorowicz's observation that Frederick's economic policy turned Sicily into "einen 'geschlossenen Handelsstaat'" (*KFZ*, 258–9) was an allusion to Fichte's

treatise *Der geschloßne Handelsstaat* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1800), which called for a strong, paternalistic state and tightly controlled collective action.

[118] See Burckhardt, *Über das Studium der Geschichte*, 299 n36. For Burckhardt's changing assessment of Frederick II, see E. M. Janssen, *Jacob Burckhardt und die Renaissance* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970), 104–9.

[119] *KFZ*, 308.

[120] E. Kantorowicz to S. George, 30 April 1924, StGA: "am 3.V. [1924] ist 700-Jahr-Feier der von Friedrich II. gegründeten Universität Neapel und alle Zeitungen sind voll von Hymnen auf den großen Kaiser, der — wie Mussolini (!) — eine Italia imperiale habe errichten wollen — kurz Fr[iedrich] II. wird zum Träger des Faschistentraumes und man schwelgt 'nell' ombre del Svevo gloriosissimo.'"

[121] George regarded Mussolini as a "große Täterperson" with the potential to translate the ideals of the Circle into political reality: Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George*, 102. Kantorowicz himself seems to have been no less impressed by the political "Tat" of the Fascists: see Kantorowicz, "Grenzen," 118. His 1943/4 lectures at Berkeley still betray this earlier fascination: LBI-EK, Kantorowicz lectures, "Nazism and Rebarbarization," 6.

[122] The historians of Fascist Italy glorified Frederick primarily as the antagonist of the popes and "la teocrazia," the harbinger of a unified Italy and the first theoretician of a "tyrannical reason of state": see Gabriele Pepe, *Lo stato ghibellino di Federico II* (Bari: Laterza & Figli, 1938), 3–7; and Cosima Damiano Fonseca, "Federico II nella storiografia italiana," in *Potere, società e popolo nell' età sveva (1210–1266)* (Bari: Dedalo, 1985), 9–24; here, 13–15.

[123] Oexle, "Das Mittelalter als Waffe," 212. According to Adrian Lyttelton, by 1925, the word "totalitarian" had already been elevated to a "central place in the political vocabulary" of Fascist Italy: Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919–1929*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987), 269.

[124] *KFZ*, 469. See also Ernst Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite: Ergänzungsband; Quellennachweise und Exkurse* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1931), 201.

[125] *KFZ*, 246, 244. Mussolini coined this formula in a speech from 28 October 1925: see Jens Petersen, "Die Entstehung des Totalitarismusbegriffs in Italien," in *Totalitarismus: Ein Studien-Reader zur Herrschaftsanalyse moderner Diktatur*, ed. Manfred Funke (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1978), 105–28; here, 105–7.

[126] See, e.g., Friedemann Scriba, *Augustus im Schwarzhemd? Die Mostra Augustea della Romanità in Rom 1937/38* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995); and Mariella Cagnetta, "Il mito de Augusto e la 'rivoluzione' fascista," *Quaderni di Storia* 2, no. 3 (1976): 139–82.

[127] *KFZ*, 444.

[128] See Hans Baron, "Renaissance in Italien I," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 21 (1931): 95–128; here, 122–4.

[129] *KFZ*, 450–1: "Denn die 'unbestimmte Freiheit' . . . hatte man vielfach grenzenlos satt und sehnte sich nach bestimmter Ordnung, wie sie der Kaiser zu brin-

gen verhieß [. . .] Die Stadtverfassungen . . . zeigten deutlich die Neigung zur Diktatur."

[130] See Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996).

[131] See Arnaldo Momigliano (citing Gertrud Bing), "How Roman Emperors Became Gods," *The American Scholar* (Spring 1986): 181–93; here, 181.

[132] Momigliano, "How Roman Emperors Became Gods," 181.

[133] Quoted in Gentile, *Sacralization of Politics*, 55–6.

[134] Quoted in Gentile, *Sacralization of Politics*, 140. For the symbols of the eagle and the cross, see Luigi Valli, *Il segreto della croce e dell' aquila nella Divina Commedia* (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1922), which Kantorowicz cites in the *Ergänzungsband*, 231. See also *KFZ*, 505, where Kantorowicz refers to the eagle and the cross as the emblems of Frederick's *Reich.* Ezra Pound's Dantesque perception of Mussolini's sacral empire, in its turn, may have been conditioned, as Reed Dasenbrook suggests, by *Kaiser Friedrich,* an English copy of which was in Pound's library: Reed Way Dasenbrook, "Ezra Pound, the last Ghibelline," *Journal of Modern Literature* 16, no. 4 (1990): 511–33; here, 517n9.

[135] *KFZ*, 471, 241, 234. See also 220: "in ihn [i.e., the State] war ja der Gott eingegangen."

[136] See Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 184–6; and Gentile, *Sacralization of Politics*, 149–50.

[137] See Reinhard Wittram, *Nationalismus und Säkularisation* (Lüneburg: Heliand, 1949).

[138] See Uriel Tal, "On Structures of Political Theology and Myth in Germany Prior to the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust as Historical Experience*, ed. Yehuda Bauer and Nathan Rotenstreich (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), 43–74.

[139] See Gustav Seibt, "Römisches Deutschland: Ein politisches Motiv bei Rudolf Borchardt und Ernst Kantorowicz," *Sinn und Form* 1 (1994): 61–71; here, 65.

[140] Edgar Salin, *Um Stefan George: Erinnerung und Zeugnis*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1954), 278: "George war . . . der erste katholische Nicht-Christ."

[141] M. Lechter to K. Wolfskehl, 9 June 1921; quoted in Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 309 n50.

[142] For the hieratic, authoritarian character of George's state, see Max Rychner, *Stefan George* (Zürich: Manesse, 1951), 118; Claude David, *Stefan George: son oeuvre poétique* (Lyon: IAC, 1952), 362; Wolfgang Braungart, *Ästhetischer Katholizismus. Stefan Georges Rituale der Literatur* (Tübingen: Niemeyer 1997); and Stefan Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus: Stefan George und der deutsche Antimodernismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgemeinschaft, 1995), esp. 95–128.

[143] See Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 322–28.

[144] See Friedrich Wolters, *Vier Reden über das Vaterland* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1927), 5–29; and Ernst Kantorowicz, "Pro Patria Mori in Medieval Political Thought," *The American Historical Review* 56, no. 3 (April 1951): 472–92, repr.

in *Selected Studies*, 308–24. Kantorowicz seems to have been well acquainted with Wolters's œuvre on the whole — his German library contained more than half a dozen of his books — including more scholarly works like the 1908 study "Über die theoretische Begründung des Absolutismus im XVII. Jahrhundert," which he cites in the *Ergänzungsband*, 99.

145 *KFZ*, 222: "Denn der diesseitige Mensch war ja noch unerlöst und war nur durch Herrscher und Staat gewissermaßen zum Stande der Unschuld . . . zurückzuführen."

146 *KFZ*, 613, 552. See 553–57.

147 See *KFZ*, 613, and Burckhardt, *Kultur der Renaissance*, 409n3.

148 Wolters, *Stefan George*, 493. On the "demonic" as a Georgean ideal, see E. Landmann, *Gespräche*, 131. Kantorowicz himself extolled the demonic as an essential characteristic of the heroes of the Secret Germany in his 1933 lecture at Frankfurt University, "Das Geheime Deutschland," in Benson and Fried, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 77–93; here, 89.

149 *KFZ*, 552, 613 and 628: "den die Völker nicht zu überwinden vermochten . . . überwunden allein von der göttlichen Macht."

150 *KFZ*, 550. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit = Sämtliche Werke, Münchner Ausgabe*, ed. Karl Richter et al., vol. 16 (Munich: Hanser, 1985), 822.

151 Percy E. Schramm, *Hitler: The Man and the Military Leader*, trans. Donald S. Detwiler (London: Allen Lane, 1972), 133. Kurt Hildebrandt, similarly, regarded Hitler as a demonic force whose productive capacity was to be channelled by George. He, too, referred to Goethe in this context: "Goethe sah im Dämonischen das Schöpferische": Kurt Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1965), 227.

152 See, e.g., Janos Bak, "Percy Ernst Schramm (1894–1970)," in *Medieval Scholarship Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline,* ed. Helen Damico and Joseph B. Zavadil (New York: Garland, 1995–1998), 1:247–62; here, 249; Joist Grolle, *Der Hamburger Percy Ernst Schramm — ein Historiker auf der Suche nach der Wirklichkeit* (Hamburg: Verein für Hamburgische Geschichte, 1989); and David Thimme, *Percy Ernst Schramm und das Mittelalter. Wandlungen eines Geschichtsbildes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

153 Percy E. Schramm, "Die Sudetendeutschen: ihre Geschichte und Leistung" (paper presented on 7 May 1939), 49–50; quoted in Karen Schönwälder, *Historiker und Politik: Geschichtswissenschaft im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1992), 131–2.

154 Kantorowicz, "Das geheime Deutschland." Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 159, calls the lecture "dieses authentische Dokument des Widerstands aus georgeanischem Geist."

155 Schöttler, "Kantorowicz in Frankreich," 154.

156 Robert Lerner, "'Meritorious Academic Service': Kantorowicz and Frankfurt," in Benson and Fried, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 14–32; here, 32n75, concludes from a letter at the Leo Baeck Institute that as early as the spring of 1934, Kantorowicz was

sending out his curriculum vitae "with the aim of emigrating." Yet no less than three contemporary observers, all more or less closely associated with "Eka," report that he was not ready to leave Germany before 1938: see Marion Dönhoff, "Mit fragwürdiger Methode," *Die Zeit*, 6 September 1996; Salin, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 7; and Friedrich Baethgen, "Ernst Kantorowicz," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 21 (1965): 1–17; here, 7. In any case, as Malkiel, "Ernst Kantorowicz," 193, remarks, the reluctance of so "eminently successful a scholar as Kantorowicz" to leave his native Germany spontaneously "certainly calls for comment."

157 See Werner Conze, "Hans Rothfels," *Historische Zeitschrift* 237 (1983): 311–60; here, 340.

158 See Hermann Heimpel, "Worte des Gedenkens an Albrecht Haushofer," *Neue Sammlung* 5 (1965): 336–42, repr. in Hermann Heimpel, *Aspekte: alte und neue Texte* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1995), 135–44; here, 138.

159 Hellmann, *Ordinarius* for medieval history at the University of Leipzig, explicitly disassociated himself from the imperialist rhetoric of the German Right in 1918. An outspoken proponent of humanist and democratic ideals, he was pensioned off a few months after the Nazi seizure of power, ostensibly for "racial" reasons, and eventually died in Theresienstadt in 1942. See Siegfried Hoyer, "Siegmund Hellmann," in *Bedeutende Gelehrte in Leipzig*, vol. 1, ed. Max Steinmetz (Leipzig: Karl Marx Universität, 1965), 219–27.

160 See Heinz Duchhardt, *Arnold Berney (1897–1943): das Schicksal eines jüdischen Historikers* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993), 24–7, 50, 67, 80–1, 95.

161 See Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 116–8, and Malkiel, "Ernst Kantorowicz," 209–11. According to his former student and associate Robert Benson, however, Kantorowicz's political attitude remained "genuinely conservative": in Kantorowicz, *Götter in Uniform*, 361.

162 Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 114, and Giesey, "Scholarly Triumphs," 198. See also Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer?*, 123, 127, who refers to Kantorowicz's "demokratische Gesinnung" and labels his letter "regimekritisch."

163 E. Kantorowicz to the Prussian Minister of Science, Art and Education, LBI-EK, Box 5, Folder 5. This folder contains the various drafts of Kantorowicz's letter, the first one dated 3 April 1933. The passages quoted above were replaced by a mere "Antastung der Ehre" in the final version of the letter.

164 Kantorowicz to the Prussian Minister of Science. These passages were replaced by the vague expression "durch die jüngsten Geschehnisse." A comparative reading of what was (most likely) the manuscript of the Frankfurt lecture on the Secret Germany as it was delivered on 14 November 1933, and a revised version which was sent to Salin on 23 November 1933, shows that one of the potentially most outspoken anti-Nazi remarks was, again, substantially toned down in the actual speech. See "Das Geheime Deutschland," 92 ("aus aufgepeitschter Gasse"), and LBI-EK, Box 2, Folder 7, "Das Geheime Deutschland," 21, where the adjective "aufgepeitschter" is omitted. A note in the margins of the lecture manuscript at the LBI-EK (1) indicates that Kantorowicz considered even this relatively restrained critique of the Nazis as "zu agressiv [*sic*], oder richtiger accusativ."

[165] E. Kantorowicz to the Prussian Minister of Science, Art and Education, 20 April 1933, LBI-EK, Box 5, Folder 5: "grundsätzlich positive Einstellung gegenüber einem national regierten Reich"; "wieder national gerichteten Deutschland." For similar reactions of nationalist German-Jewish intellectuals to the seizure of power, see Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution: 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 14–6.

[166] See Boureau, *Histoires d'un historien*, 25. Note that Boureau's account of Kantorowicz's life and thought is not always reliable, as Schöttler, "Kantorowicz in Frankreich," 152–8, has shown.

[167] E. Kantorowicz to S. George, 4 June 1933, StGA.

[168] E. Kantorowicz to S. George, 26 November 1933, StGA: "Ekel, Erschütterungen und Schmerzen . . . Hass."

[169] E. Kantorowicz to S. George, 10 July 1933, StGA.

[170] See Robert L. Benson, Ralph E. Giesey, and Margaret B. Sevcenko, "Defending Kantorowicz," *The New York Review of Books,* 13 August 1992, 65, as well as Abulafia, "Kantorowicz and Frederick II," 203, and Petrow, *Der Dichter als Führer?*, 123, 128.

[171] Malkiel, "Ernst Kantorowicz," 199, 211. Benson questions the credibility of Malkiel's comments on this subject in Kantorowicz, *Götter in Uniform*, 363.

[172] See Ulrich Raulff, "Der letzte Abend des Ernst Kantorowicz," *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 18 (1999): 167–91; here, 175.

[173] E. Salin to S. George, 10 September 1933, StGA; quoted in Groppe, *Die Macht der Bildung*, 664: "die gespenstische Verfratzung all dessen woran wir [i.e., the George Circle] gearbeitet hatten." Salin's unequivocal rejection of Nazism in this letter, written exactly two months after Kantorowicz's, contrasts sharply with the latter's ambiguities. But cf. Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933: Ein Bericht* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1986), 21, for a very different assessment of Salin's relation to National Socialism.

[174] Like Kantorowicz, Edith Landmann was not sure how to view the Third Reich in relation to George's "New Reich." "Schaudern wir vor dieser Parodie auf das Neue Reich, die vom Dritten Reich gemimt wird," she wrote in a circular letter to the Jewish members of the Circle in 1933, "oder sollen wir . . . in diesen Bastarden des Neuen Reiches die lang Ersehnten begrüssen, die die Erde sauber fegen vom alten Unrat und das Land umpflügen, das später dann seine echten Söhne bebauen?": Edith Landmann "An die deutschen Juden, die zum geheimen Deutschland hielten," [1933], LBI-EK, Stefan George Collection, no. AR 1038, 1.

[175] Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 228: "im Nationalsozialismus das Positive nicht zu übersehen." This is confirmed by E. Landmann, *Gespräche*, 209; and Thormaehlen, *Erinnerungen*, 282.

[176] This revisionist promise seems to have been a central reason for George's positive assessment of the Nazis: see M. Landmann, *Erinnerungen*, 48.

[177] See E. Landmann, *Gespräche*, 209: "Und als ich auf die Brutalität der Formen hinwies [George replied]: Im Politischen gingen halt die Dinge anders."

[178] Maurice Bowra, *Memories, 1898–1939* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), 294. Ladner, who visited "Eka" in Frankfurt in 1934, recalled his "kühl betrachtende" attitude towards the recent political events in Germany, most notably Hitler's violent purge of the SA, the so-called Röhm Putsch: Gerhart Ladner, *Erinnerungen = Sitzungsberichte der Östereichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 617 (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1994), 35.

[179] For Nazism as a political religion, see Eric Voegelin, *The Political Religions* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1986); Hans Maier, *Totalitarianism and Political Religions* (London: Routledge, 2004); Klaus Vondung, "National socialism as a political religion: Potentials and limits of an analytical concept," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 6, no.1 (June 2005): 87–95; and Wolfgang Hardtwig, "Political Religion in Modern Germany: Reflections on Nationalism, Socialism, and National Socialism," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 28 (Spring 2001): 3–23.

[180] See Klaus Schreiner, "Führertum, Rasse, Reich: Wissenschaft von der Geschichte nach der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung," in *Wissenschaft im Dritten Reich*, ed. Peter Lundgreen (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 163–252, esp. 190–204; and Schönwälder, *Historiker und Politik*, 53–65, 130–2, 216–29. For Haller's Ghibelline justification of Hitler's Germany — documented in the changing forewords to the later editions of his *Epochen der deutschen Geschichte* in 1934, 1936 and 1943 — see K. F. Werner, "Die deutsche Historiographie unter Hitler," in *Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland*, ed. Bernd Faulenbach (Munich: Beck, 1974), 86–96; here, 90–1.

[181] See E. Kantorowicz to S. George, 26 November 1933, StGA.

[182] According to Kantorowicz's list of publications of 1939, this study was "planned as a private print, but withdrawn by the publisher quite recently": LBI-EK, Box 5, Folder 5.

[183] The use of the plural here indicates that Kantorowicz was referring to the Third Reich as well as to Mussolini's "Italia imperiale."

[184] A reference to Schramm, who was then publishing his *ordines* studies in the *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*.

[185] For some Nazi equivalents to the Fascist *laudes*, see Josef Ackermann, *Heinrich Himmler als Ideologe* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1970), 79n233.

[186] Ernst Kantorowicz, "Laudes Regiae: Studien zu den liturgischen Herrscherakklamationen des Mittelalters," 59, LBI-EK, Box 3, Folder 25.

[187] Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, 96, 97. These are two characteristic instances of Cantor's polemical, at times sensationalist account of Kantorowicz's "work and ideas," which subjects the latter, in Roberto Delle Donne's words, to a *reductio ad unum*: see Roberto Delle Donne, "Kantorowicz e la sua opera su Federico II," in *Friedrich II.: Tagung des Deutschen Histosischen Instituts in Rom im Gedenkjahr 1994*, ed. Arnold Esch and Norbert Kamp (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), 67–86; here, 68.

[188] E. Kantorowicz to E. Morwitz, September 1926, StGA. (This is Hoffmann's dating of the letter; the George-Archiv dates it "summer 1925"): "es heisst, dass Wolters

alle möglichen nationalistischen u. völkischen Aufrufe mitunterzeichnet habe . . . [M] einem Gefühl nach ist ein derartiges politisches Heraustreten vollkommen unmöglich, wenn man sich gleichzeitig mit anderm identifiziert. Die private Anschauung in politicis bleibt ja jedem unbenommen — aber aktiv kann man nicht zwei Staaten dienen u. vor allem: es werden damit die gewiss über allen Parteien stehenden Dinge *von offizieller Seite* in den Dreck einer Partei gezogen, um mit dieser zu fraternisieren. Bitte, lieber Ernst Morwitz . . . kann das nicht inhibiert werden?"

189 Marion Dönhoff, telephone interview with the author, 13 March 2000.

190 See Eckhart Grünewald, "'Übt an uns mord, und reicher blüht was blüht!,'" in Benson and Fried, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 57–76; here, 63–64. It seems remarkable, nonetheless, that Uxkull sent Kantorowicz a copy of the speech in question with the inscription "in steter und herzlichster Freundschaft."

191 T. Mommsen to E. Kantorowicz, 13 June 1937, LBI-EK, Box 5, Folder 3: "Und der sog. dritte Humanismus kann mit Leichtigkeit als 'ideologischer Überbau' von ganz anderen als humanen oder humanistischen Gewalten und Tendenzen in Beschlag genommen werden."

192 It went through four editions between 1927 and 1936, selling more than 12,000 copies — a remarkable success for a scholarly work, especially during the Great Depression: see Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 156. According to Horst Fuhrmann, these numbers do not even fully reflect "die große prägende Wirkung des Werkes" on the German *Bildungsbürgertum* in those years: see Horst Fuhrmann, "Die Heimholung des Ernst Kantorowicz," *Die Zeit*, 22 March 1991.

193 See Malkiel, "Ernst Kantorowicz," 195.

194 With 3,000 copies, the fourth edition in 1936 was larger than both the first (2,600) and the third editions (2,200).

195 See Alfred Rosenberg, "Raumpolitik," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 3 (1932): 193–200; here, 197, 198.

196 Oswald Torsten, *Riche: Eine geschichtliche Studie über die Entwicklung der Reichsidee* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1943), 98.

197 Fried, "Kantorowicz and Postwar Historiography," 187.

198 See Carl Arnold Willemsen, *Bibliographie zur Geschichte Kaiser Friedrichs II. und der letzten Staufer* (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1986).

199 Frederick II, *De arte venandi cum avibus*, ed. Carl Arnold Willemsen, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1942).

200 Kantorowicz, *Ergänzungsband*, 156.

201 Herbert Grundmann, "Kaiser Friedrich II. 1194–1250," in *Die Großen Deutschen*, ed. Willy Andreas and Wilhelm von Scholz, vol. 1 (Berlin: Propyläen, 1935), 124–42, repr. in Wolf, *Stupor Mundi*, 109–33; here, 112.

202 H. Böhmer, "Kaiser Friedrich im Kampf um das Reich" (Ph.D. thesis, Cologne University, 1938).

203 Paul Kirn, "Die Verdienste der staufischen Kaiser um das Deutsche Reich," *Historische Zeitschrift* 164, no. 2 (1941): 261–84, repr. in Wolf, *Stupor Mundi*, 194–221, esp. 195, 204–12.

[204] On Maschke, see Wolfgang Wippermann, *Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1979), 276n313. Ipser was an associate of Rosenberg to whom he dedicated his 1942 book on Frederick: "Dem Ghibellinen [!] Alfred Rosenberg gewidmet": Karl Ipser, *Kaiser Friedrich II. Leben und Werk in Italien* (Leipzig: Hammer, 1942).

[205] Erich Maschke, *Das Geschlecht der Staufer* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1943; repr., Aalen: Scientia, 1970), 86–87. Ipser, *Kaiser Friedrich*, 17, called Frederick — evidently alluding to *KFZ*, 88 — "der Pate Preußens."

[206] Erich Maschke, "Die Ostpolitik der staufischen Könige," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 12 (1941): 442–54; here, 451–3.

[207] H. F. Anders, "Kaiser Friedrich II. und die Juden," *Nationalsozialistische Monatsheft* 14 (1943): 310–3; here, 311. See *KFZ*, 245–6. Anders's reading of the Fulda "ritual murder" trial of 1231, similarly, followed Kantorowicz: see *KFZ*, 379. See Hellmut Schramm, "Kaiser Friedrich II. und die Juden: Neue Erkenntnisse zur Judenpolitik der Hohenstaufen," *Die Judenfrage* 7 (1943): 39–41.

[208] Maschke, *Das Geschlecht der Staufer*, 143, 163, 166–8.

[209] *KFZ*, 632.

[210] Ipser, *Kaiser Friedrich*, 21. Passages like this, unsurprisingly, were deleted from the postwar reedition of Ipser's book, but most of the paraphrases of *Kaiser Friedrich* remained intact. The new, "de-Nazified" version concluded with a quotation from George — and appeared under a suitably Georgean title. See Karl Ipser, *Der Staufer Friedrich II: Heimlicher Kaiser der Deutschen* (Berg: Türmer, 1978).

[211] Note in this context that Hitler, like Kantorowicz, viewed the Weimar Republic as an Interregnum or "Zwischenreich": Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Ullstein, 1997), 232.

[212] Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, 140. On Hitler and Frederick II, see Jochen Kirchoff, *Nietzsche, Hitler und die Deutschen: Die Perversion des Neuen Zeitalters* (Berlin: Edition Dionysos, 1990), 150–8.

[213] Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, 334.

[214] For Hitler's Ghibellinism, see Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, 78, 138–41, 230–3, 334–5. Hitler vehemently defended the Italian policy of the Hohenstaufen against Rosenberg (231). These passages contrast sharply with the oft-quoted remark from *Mein Kampf*: "Wir [i.e., the Nationalsocialists] setzen dort an, wo man vor sechs Jahrhunderten endete. Wir stoppen den ewigen Germanenzug nach dem Süden . . . Europas und weisen den Blick nach dem Land im Osten": Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 19th ed. (Munich: Franz Eher Verlag, 1933), 742. According to Schramm, Hitler was "completely rooted within the cultural boundaries of the old Roman Empire" and "took no part in his followers' grotesque glorification of the Teutons": Schramm, *Hitler: The Man*, 22. This was perhaps what Kantorowicz meant when he remarked that "Hitler was the only Nazi who did not believe in National Socialism": Bowra, *Memories*, 294.

[215] See Ipser, *Heimlicher Kaiser*, 230. Hermann Giesler, his personal architect, reports that Hitler wanted his residence of old age to be built in the same austere style as "das kostbare Castel del Monte Friedrichs II.": Hermann Giesler, *Ein*

anderer Hitler: Bericht seines Architekten; Erlebnisse, Gespräche, Reflexionen (Leoni: Druffel, 1977), 406.

[216] Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, 180. See *KFZ*, 381.

[217] Albert Speer, *Spandauer Tagebücher* (Frankfurt am Main and Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1975), 590–91.

[218] E. Kantorowicz to U. Küpper, 24 May 1963, StGA (Akte Küpper).

[219] Kantorowicz to Küpper, 24 May 1963.

[220] See G. Seibt, "Der Staat als Kunstwerk. Das Geheime Deutschland und der Widerstand," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (8 April 1995): 27.

[221] The incident is reported by Percy Ernst Schramm in the introduction to Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941–42*, ed. Percy Ernst Schramm, Andreas Hillgruber and Martin Vogt, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1965), 69.

[222] The label "fascist classic" is taken from Steven Rowan, "Comment: Otto Brunner," in *Paths of Continuity: Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and James Van Horn Melton (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 293–97; here, 296; see also Oexle, "Das Mittelalter als Waffe," 212; and Seibt, "Römisches Deutschland," 63–64. Kantorowicz's awareness of his book's popularity amongst the Nazi elite is evidenced in his letter to Ursula Küpper of 24 May 1963, StGA.

[223] Salin, Privatdruck, 10, reporting a discussion with Kantorowicz on 24 October 1952. Kantorowicz's fears, it seems, were not entirely unjustified, as the 1994 reprint of a chapter from his Hohenstaufen biography in Hans-Dietrich Sander's right-wing organ *Staatsbriefe* demonstrates: see G. Seibt, "Echo des Bocksgesangs. Was die Rechten lasen oder Woran ist Botho Strauß schuld," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (6 April 1994): 27. See also the commemorative note on Kantorowicz in the neo-conservative organ *Junge Freiheit* of July 2000, which hails the author of *Kaiser Friedrich* as "ein deutsch-jüdischer Historiker und Patriot wahrhaft nationaler Gesinnung": Stefan Pietschmann, "Ein Kranz vom Geheimen Deutschland: Zur Erinnerung an den Historiker und Friedrich II.-Biographen Ernst Kantorowicz," *Junge Freiheit* 30 (21 July 2000).

[224] See *KFZ*, "Vorbemerkung": "Als im Mai 1924 das Königreich Italien die Siebenhundertjahrfeier der Universität Neapel beging, einer Stiftung des Hohenstaufen Friedrich II., lag an des Kaisers Sarkophag im Dom zu Palermo ein Kranz mit der Inschrift: 'SEINEN KAISERN UND HELDEN/DAS GEHEIME DEUTSCHLAND'. Nicht daß die vorliegende Lebensgeschichte Friedrichs II. durch diesen Vorfall angeregt wäre . . . wohl aber durfte er angenommen werden als Zeichen, daß auch in andern als gelehrten Kreisen eine Teilnahme für die großen Herrschergestalten sich zu regen beginne — gerade in unkaiserlicher Zeit." In a letter to Ursula Küpper of 13 December 1962, Kantorowicz had already stipulated that the foreword to the *Ergänzungsband*, which contained a similar reference to the growing veneration of "die großen deutschen Herrschergestalten," also be removed.

[225] See E. Kantorowicz to U. Küpper, 24 May 1963, StGA.

[226] According to Robert Lerner, "Kantorowicz and Continuity," in Benson and Fried, *Ernst Kantorowicz*, 104–23, this process of reorientation began as early as the 1930s. For an insightful interpretation of the antiliberal and "counter-Enlightenment" continuities between *Kaiser Friedrich* and *The King's Two Bodies*, see David Norbrook, "The Emperor's New Body? Richard II, Ernst Kantorowicz, and the Politics of Shakespeare Criticism," *Textual Practice* 10, no. 2 (1996): 329–57.

[227] Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 322–28, rightly remarks that Kantorowicz, while continuing to research typically Georgean themes, treated these in a decidedly more sobre, scholarly style after his emigration to the United States. Kantorowicz himself acknowledged his lasting indebtedness to George in a letter to Robert Boehringer, observing "dass alles, was ich zu leisten vermag, aus *einer* Quelle gespeist it, und dass diese Quelle auch nach über 20 Jahren immer noch sprudelt": E. Kantorowicz to R. Boehringer, 13 June 1954, StGA.

[228] Ernst Kantorowicz, "Dualism," 8, LBI-EK, Kantorowicz lectures.

[229] This expression is taken from Roberto Delle Donne, "Kantorowicz e la sua opera su Federico II," in *Friedrich II.: Tagung des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom im Gedenkjahr 1994*, ed. Arnold Esch and Norbert Kamp (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996), 67–86; here, 68.

[230] Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 324.

IV: The New Reich and the Third Reich

10: Third Reich and Third Europe: Stefan George's Imperial Mythologies in Context

Richard Faber

For most National Socialist propagandists, the German Reich began with the Saxon king Henry the Fowler (876–936) and his imperial descendants.[1] They denounced Charlemagne, accordingly, as the butcher of the Saxons (*Sachsenschlächter*) and a traitor to the national cause, because he championed the idea of Rome.[2] The reprobation of Charlemagne on the part of German nationalists had long been fuelled by racial as well as *kleindeutsch* and Protestant concerns. Hitler himself took a different view: "Wenn wir überhaupt einen Weltanspruch erheben wollen," he declared in February 1942, "müssen wir uns auf die deutsche Kaisergeschichte berufen. Die Kaisergeschichte ist das gewaltigste Epos, das — neben dem alten Rom — die Welt je gesehen hat."[3] In his table talk, Hitler resolutely defended Charlemagne and at times even invoked him as a model for his own policies.[4] To be sure, Hitler's vision of Charlemagne and his empire differed in a number of important ways from what the distinguished medievalist Otto Westphal termed the idea of a Carolingian International.[5] This idea became a practical possibility only after 1945, as is evidenced by the remark of a French officer who described the task of European reconstruction as "refaire l'empire de Charlemagne."[6] The Carolingian International was one of many mythical conceptions of the Reich that were circulating in Weimar Germany. These imperial mythologies, which will be explored below, form a crucial backdrop to George's thinking, after the First World War, about Germany, Europe, and Germany's role in Europe.

The Carolingian International

In the wake of the Great War, German scholars and intellectuals invoked the Holy Roman Empire not just for revanchist reasons, but also to historically legitimize a pacifist, cosmopolitan, and Christian conception of Europe. As Hermann Platz, spokesperson of the Catholic Center party,

stated in his book *Um Rhein und Abendland* (1924): "Das Rechte, das heute als Neuanfang gesetzt werden muss, . . . das ist die abendländische Idee. Das ferne Symbol ist die Krone Karls des Großen."[7] The Carolingian Empire, symbolized by Charlemagne's crown, was supposed to give genealogical substance to the pan-European project. For the (frequently Catholic) proponents of this variant of the *Reichsidee*, Franco-German rapprochement was a fundamental precondition for European unification, which they conceived as a return to the Frankish, and thus Franco-German, Empire of Charlemagne. The most famous statement of this pan-European adaptation of the imperial myth was Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's programmatic book.[8]

The breakup of the Carolingian empire under Charlemagne's son Louis the Pious (778–840) precipitated the struggle for European hegemony between Germany and France. In his *Flugblätter* of 1919, Rudolf Pannwitz envisioned the reconstruction of the Reich after the First World War as the termination of this millennial Franco-German antagonism and the dawn of a "Third Europe": "frankreich und deutschland sind die vormächte des kontinents die urmächte des zweiten europas des christlichen europas karls des großen (italien aber ist seine dritte macht) sie werden die schöpfermächte des dritten und dauernden europa werden."[9] The notion of a Third Europe was quite distinct from that of a Third Reich. Indeed, for many Catholic opponents to Hitler and his followers, it represented the exact opposite of the expansionist and racist concept of a Greater Germany proposed by the National Socialists. As early as 1932, Hans Weinzierl held up the early Carolingian manifestation of the Holy Roman Empire as a (Christian) antithesis to a (racially defined) nation-state in his essay "Herr von Papen proklamiert das sacrum imperium," published in Georg Moenius's *Allgemeine Rundschau*:[10]

> Es ist zweifellos ein Verdienst Papens, die ewige Idee des sacrum imperium überhaupt wieder den verstaubten Kodizes entrissen und in die aktuelle Politik eingeführt zu haben. Brüning hatte es nie fertiggebracht, dem nationalsozialistischen Chiliasmus eine überlegene Parole entgegen zu schleudern. Wenn nun Herr von Papen das "Heilige deutsche Reich" proklamiert, dann muß er sich auch zu den Prinzipien dieser Reichsidee bekennen. Zunächst sei festgestellt, daß es niemals ein Heiliges deutsches Reich gegeben hat. Die Geschichte kennt nur ein Heiliges *Römisches* Reich. Der Zusatz "deutscher Nation" wurde . . . erst in späteren Jahrhunderten hinzugefügt und bedeutete, daß das ursprüngliche Römische Reich auf den von der deutschen Nation beherrschten Raum zusammengeschrumpft war.

Weinzierl implicitly objected to the narrowly *völkisch* conceptions of the Reich put forth by the National Socialists, insisting that

> schon das Reich Ottos des Großen war streng genommen nur mehr ein Rumpfreich. In der Universalmonarchie Karls des Großen tritt uns das "erste Reich" in seiner *Voll*gestalt entgegen. Das war aber kein Nationalstaat und kein Nationalreich, sondern die Civitas der abendländischen Christenheit.[11]

Weinzierl boiled down the antithesis between the centralized, secular nation-state and a supranational Christian Reich to the historical alternative: Bismarck or Charlemagne.[12] This was the choice that (West) German Europeanists faced after the Second World War, when a geopolitical opportunity had arisen for the realization of the pan-European vision of a Christian *Abendland*. As Wilhelm Hausenstein, the Federal Republic's first ambassador to France, attested, Adenauer "empfand die Geschichtlichkeit seiner . . . Situation . . . als Auftrag, der deutschen Geschichte (und nicht ihr allein) in einem überaus schwierigen Augenblick eine bestimmte Wendung zu geben — die abendländische."[13] In February 1948, Adenauer remarked in the *Rheinischer Merkur*, soon to become his favored periodical, that in the Western, Rhenish regions of Germany, there was a natural inclination towards Europe, and an open-minded, cosmopolitan outlook, free of any nationalist blinkers.[14]

The noted historian of postwar Germany Arnulf Baring qualified this remark, pointing out that the Catholic conception of Europe was somewhat more restricted than Adenauer seemed to suggest: "Dieses Bewusstsein ist weniger gesamt — als westeuropäisch; das Rheinland empfindet sich vor allem als ein Teil des europäischen Westens."[15] In fact, Adenauer himself located the core of what he referred to as the "Christian Occident" rather precisely between the East of France and the West of Germany: "Zwischen Loire und Weser schlug einst das Herz des christlichen Abendlandes. Der Stil des Kölner Doms, des ehrwürdigen Wahrzeichens des deutschen Westens, hat seine Wurzeln im französischen Boden. . . . Eine Erneuerung des abendländischen Gedankens kann nur das Ergebnis einer fruchtbaren Begegnung zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich sein."[16] Adenauer's European policies were consistent with this early remark and according to Hausenstein, he was a worthy recipient of the Charlemagne Prize in 1954: "Der Karlspreis, von der Stadt Aachen für Persönlichkeiten gestiftet, die in der Deutschland und Frankreich umfassenden Einheit Karls des Großen verblieben, dem Kanzler 1954 verliehen, stand ihm besonders an."[17]

Two other Christian Democrats, Alcide de Gasperi and Robert Schuman, received the same prize in 1956 and 1958, respectively. In the frequently panegyric historiography of postwar Europe, these three politicians — Adenauer, Schuman, de Gasperi — are generally presented as the founding fathers of the European Union. All three were Catholics born in cities that belonged to the heartland of the *sacrum imperium Romanum* (Cologne, Metz, and Trent, respectively). Their conception of "the West" drew on the memory of Charlemagne's trans-European empire. As early as

1931, Richard Bie had invoked this empire as a historical model in his programmatically entitled book *Das katholische Europa*. According to Bie, Charlemagne was an empire builder as well as the architect of Europe.[18]

In a similar vein, Friedrich Heer, Austrian historian, founder of a Catholic resistance group in Nazi-occupied Vienna, and, from 1946 to 1961, editor of the Catholic weekly *Die Furche*,[19] referred to the establishment of Charlemagne's empire as a foundational moment in the history of the West:

> Gründung unseres Abendlandes [*sic*] ist das Reich Karls des Großen. Seine Strahlweite bezeugen zu recht die neuen Domfenster 1951 im Aachener Münster, der Krönungsstadt des Heiligen Reiches, wenn sie mit der Heilsgeschichte . . . die irdische Genesis dieses Reichs abbilden: in den vier antiken Kardinaltugenden, verkörpert nur durch vier christliche Heilige; daneben die Väter der heidnischen Antike Äneas und Vergil; zu ihnen tritt der Chor der Kirche bis zu Benedikt als Vater des Abendlandes, ihm gesellen sich Heilige der Theologie . . ., der Gottesschau . . ., der christlichen Kunst.[20]

In his panoramic history *Das Experiment Europa: Tausend Jahre Christenheit* (1951), Heer gave much space to these religious elements in the making of the West, putting Charlemagne's theologian Alcuin of York (d. 804) on a par with the emperor himself. He established a connection between Alcuin's ecclesiastical doctrines and the Augustinian theology of Eusebius,[21] thus emphasizing the link between the Holy Roman Empire and the *imperium Romanum*. In another book, he called Virgil's Fourth Eclogue the foundational text of the West.[22] Theodor Haecker, a German writer and translator and, like Heer, a member of the resistance against Hitler, also made much of the *translatio imperii* from the emperors of Ancient Rome to the Carolingian rulers in his book *Vater des Abendlandes* (1931):

> In Aachen steht der Stuhl Karls des Großen . . . Er ist aufgerichtet aus Marmorplatten, die aus der Stadt Rom nach Aachen gebracht worden waren . . . Der Stuhl Karls des Großen steht in einer Kirche, und vor ihm und über ihm wölbt sich die Kuppel mit der thronenden "Majestas Domini.[23]

For Heer as for Haecker, who had converted to Catholicism in 1921, the *sacrum imperium* of the Christian West grew out of the Roman Empire and its original prophet was none other than Virgil.[24]

At the same time, Haecker's *Reichsidee* differed in important ways from Heer's. Especially in his later writings, Haecker gave his conception of the Reich a German, nationalist twist that was entirely alien to Heer's thinking. Already in *Vater des Abendlandes*, he had been anxious to point out that Charlemagne's throne was placed on German soil and that the city

of Aachen — rather than Weimar or Potsdam — represented the greatest national treasure for today's Germany, and its destiny. Aachen, for Haecker, was not so much the nucleus of the Christian West as the historical root, both sacred and profane, of *Deutschtum*.[25] For Heer, by contrast, the Carolingian empire was a supranational entity, and the city of Aachen symbolized Germany's commitment to the European cause, rather than her exalted position within the West.

Rhein-Europa

In a 1956 article for the periodical *Neues Abendland*, Otto von Habsburg, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, distinguished between "Rhein-Europa" and "Donau-Europa."[26] While "Donau-Europe" had been incorporated into the Communist Eastern Bloc after the Second World War, "Rhein-Europe" was now "Free Europe," the historical core of the liberal, democratic (and Christian) West. Like so many proponents of the European idea before him,[27] Otto von Habsburg identified Rhein-Europe with Carolingian Europe. The Carolingian rulers had been the great unifying force in European history and the natural center of their Empire was the Rhine. In 1925, the German philosopher Leopold Ziegler argued along similar lines, describing the Rhine as the "bridge" of a unified Europe:[28]

> ein einiges Reich Europa, dessen Brücke zum ersten Mal der Rhein ist, um in keiner späteren Zeit je wieder etwas anderes zu sein oder sein zu können. Denn mitnichten setzt Karl der Große diesen Rhein als Grenze, wie das in heillos mißverstandener Verblendung die westlichen Erben seines Reiches bis auf diesen Tag mit allen Mitteln der List, des Betruges oder der Gewalt zu erreichen versuchen.[29]

While its general message was Europeanist, Ziegler's book, which bore the eloquent title *Das Heilige Reich der Deutschen*, contained a number of passages that exhibited Francophobic tendencies and that seemed to suggest that the Reich, though a supranational entity, was destined to be led by German rulers. After 1933, these tendencies became more pronounced in Ziegler's work, and in 1940 he implied that Hitler's recent invasion of France had been inspired by his book.[30] These later developments notwithstanding, Ziegler's Rhenish conception of the Reich remained relevant after 1945, when the ideologists of Europe took up his comments of 1925:

> in tausend Jahren entstand Europa in immer neuer Lebendigkeit und Körperlichkeit hier [am Rhein], in keiner absehbaren Zeit wird es anderswo entstehen oder entstehen können.[31]

For Ziegler, the Rhine was the Mediterranean of what he regarded as the second Western European Empire, the Roman Empire being the first. In antiquity, he argued, European civilization had spread around the Mediterranean basin; since the days of Charlemagne, however, it radiated from the shores of the mythical river.[32]

There were a number of intellectuals in the interwar period who similarly hailed the Rhine and its surrounding areas as the natural hub of a new Europe that would be modeled on the old Frankish-Carolingian Reich. Like Ziegler, they invoked the Rhine as a symbolic link between France and Germany. On the German side, these intellectuals pointed to the historical possibility of a Rhine-Germany that had existed in the form of the *Rheinbund* or Confederation of the Rhine during the early 1800s, when Europe was dominated by Napoleon's French Empire. In his *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, published between 1929 and 1937, the Catholic (and republican) historian Franz Schnabel, himself a scion of the liberal bourgeoisie of Baden, argued that such a Third Germany had already begun to take shape in the eighteenth century, wedged between — and opposed to — Austria and Prussia, whose struggle for mastery in Central Europe constantly threatened to eradicate it.[33] Adenauer's diplomat, Wilhelm Hausenstein, an ardent Francophile who was also passionately devoted to the idea of *Mitteldeutschland*, associated this anti-Prussian conception of Germanness with the members of the George Circle: "Immer wieder finde ich Karl Wolfkehls Formel richtig: Deutschland ist Alemannia, nicht Germania. (Germania ist gleich Reichspreußen oder großpreußisches Reich.)"[34]

Hausenstein shared George's Prussophobic animus and his concept of "Alemannia," though adopted from Wolfskehl, strongly resembles George's notion of "Lotharingen." Another Francophile, the Alsatian literary scholar Ernst Robert Curtius who taught at the University of Bonn for several decades, saw a deep connection between George's work and his Rhenish provenance. For Curtius, George was

> der letzte große Dichter rheinfränkischen Stammes, Stefan George, fühlte sich durch geheime Wahlverwandtschaft dem römischen Germanien und dem fränkischen Mittelreich Lotharingen zugehörig, aus dem sein Geschlecht stammte. In sechs dunklen Rheinsprüchen hat er die Erinnerung an dieses Reich traumhaft in die Zukunft beschworen. Es wird die Herrschaft von Ost und West, Deutschland und Frankreich, abschütteln: "Ein fürstlich paar geschwister hielt in frone / Bisher des weiten Innenreiches mitte. / Bald wacht aus dem jahrhundertschlaf das dritte / Auch echte kind und hebt im Rhein die krone.[35]

In his analysis of the *Rheinsprüche*, Curtius brings to the fore George's critical attitude towards Bismarck's Empire inscribed in George's glorification of the Rhine:

> Wer dem Rhein verbunden ist, mag den Mythos des Dichters in sich aufklingen lassen. Vier Städte werden genannt: die "Erste" Stadt (Basel), die "Silberstadt" (Argentoratum, Straßburg), die "Goldene Stadt" (Mainz) und das "heilige" Köln. Der aufgewirbelte Strom spricht: "Den eklen schutt von rötel kalk und teer / Spei ich hinaus ins reinigende meer." Durch einen Leser wurde der Dichter darauf aufmerksam gemacht, daß "rötel, kalk und teer" den Landesfarben des kaiserlichen Deutschland entsprächen. Er *ließ* diese Deutung lächelnd *zu*.[36]

The four cities that Curtius lists in this passage are all steeped in Roman history and Rhenish culture. In her postwar novel *Das unauslöschliche Siegel* (1946), Elisabeth Langgässer, who had grown up, like George, in the predominantly Catholic milieu of Rheinhessen, describes the exchange between a German officer and his French counterpart during the First World War. In order to demonstrate his country's contribution to Rhenish culture, the German begins by listing Cologne, Aachen, Trier, Speyer, Worms, Frankfurt, and Mainz. The Frenchman counters by enumerating Rary, Fleurines, Rhuis, Chanlis, and Champlieu. Eventually, the German, after mentioning various free imperial cities and episcopal sees along the Rhine, acknowledges that Germany, as much as France, and indeed the entire West, rests on the foundations of the Holy Roman Empire.[37]

Konrad Adenauer, a devout Catholic who was born and raised in — and, between 1917 and 1933, served as mayor of — Cologne, shared this belief that "the West" was fundamentally Rhenish. His ambassador Hausenstein thought that Adenauer's Rhenish consciousness lastingly shaped his work as German chancellor: "Adenauer . . . konzipierte die Bundesrepublik auf die rheinische, ja niederrheinische Achse hin, und zwar mit jener jegliche andere Kombination von vornherein mit der Stärke einer gewissen Naivität ausschließenden Natürlichkeit."[38] His Rhenish background determined his choice of Bonn as the new capital for the Federal Republic as well as his efforts to bring about a rapprochement with France: "die Hauptstadt wurde vom Kanzler auf dem Ufer gesucht, auf dem Köln liegt — auf dem linken . . . Sein Bedürfnis, zwischen der Bundesrepublik und Frankreich einen völligen Frieden zu stiften, lag immer schon auch in den lokalen Fundamenten des Kanzlers begründet."[39] Both his domestic and his foreign policies were informed by the belief in the centrality of the Rhineland and its European significance, a belief that had been voiced as early as 1924 by the Catholic intellectual Platz in his *Um Rhein und Abendland*: "Unser Sitz ist die Mitte. Die Mitte Europas, das ist klar. Aber auch die Mitte Deutschlands. Wir fühlen uns gar nicht als deutsches Grenzland, obwohl wir auch Randfunktionen ausüben. Wir fühlen uns als Ausgangspunkt, als Kern."[40] According to Hausenstein this "center" was the Lower Rhine in particular and, even more specifically, the former arch bishopric and free imperial city of Cologne. Adenauer's biographer Hans-

Peter Schwarz similarly refers to Cologne Cathedral as the focal and reference point of his German and European policy.[41] Adenauer himself said as much when he called Cologne, founded by the Romans and shaped by Christianity and humanism, the heart of the West.

Roman Germany

What inspired Adenauer's conception of the West or, as he would have called it, *Abendland*, to be sure, was not the Rhineland in itself, but its peculiar genius: the genius of Roman Catholicism and Roman antiquity. Significantly, the Chancellor's favorite spot in all of Cologne was St. Maria im Kapitol, the largest of the numerous Romanesque churches in the city, built on the foundations of an ancient Roman temple around AD 700 by the wife of the Franconian ruler Pepin of Herstal (635–714). On his voyage along the Rhine in 1904, the eighteen-year-old Ernst Robert Curtius also found much to admire in the church, in particular its historical fusion of classical antiquity and Western Christendom. As he recalled in a brief essay of 1950, entitled "Stefan George im Gespräch":

> diese Kirche, in die ich später [Max] Scheler zum Hochamt begleitet habe, tat mirs an, mehr als alles andere. Was lag alles in diesen Worten: Maria — Capitol! Christentum und Römertum; leiblich berührt, geschichtlich bestätigt; in einem Bau verschmolzen und gewährt; gegenwärtig.[42]

In his booklet, Curtius evokes this moment as a turning point in his life, an anticipation of the later Rhine experience he shared with George.[43] For both men, this experience was multilayered: the Rhine meant more to them than just the seat of Western Christianity, it also bore the traces of ancient Rome. The Roman Empire and its legacies represent a recurrent motif in George's poetry.[44]

The sixth and the final of George's Rhine poems, published in the collection *Der siebente Ring* (1907), alludes to the Roman aura of the Rhine:

> Sprecht von des Festes von des Reiches nähe —
> Sprecht erst vom neuen wein im neuen schlauch:
> Wenn ganz durch eure seelen dumpf und zähe
> Mein feurig blut sich regt, mein römischer hauch![45]

For Curtius, these lines echoed the Romanophilia of another scion of the Rhine region:

> Sulpiz Boisserée berichtet unter dem 11. August 1815: "Goethes Vorliebe für das Römische wurde ausgesprochen; er habe gewiß

> schon einmal unter Hadrian gelebt. Alles Römische ziehe ihn unwillkürlich an. Dieser große Verstand, diese Ordnung in allen Dingen, sage ihm zu, das Griechische nicht so."[46]

Curtius believed that the utterances by George and Goethe demonstrated a more general elective affinity between *Deutschtum* and *romanitas*. The Western regions of Germany had inherited and indeed preserved essential aspects of Roman civilization that now formed the basis of a transnational European consciousness.[47]

This was another variant of the *Europaidee*, and it was intimately connected with the idea of Rome. The German proponents of this idea, including George after the First World War, generally stressed that only the "Roman" parts of Germany, that is, those colonized by and incorporated into the Roman Empire, were truly European in this sense. These territories lay at the frontier of what Curtius later called "Romania" in his chef d'oeuvre *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948), that is, the community of Romance cultures (notably Italy, France, and Spain) formed by the Latinate tradition of the *imperium Romanum*. They had become Christian because they had been Roman — and, as such, they had always been "Catholic." St. Maria im Kapitol was one monument that symbolized this historical continuity of Roman antiquity and Roman Catholicism in Germany. Another one was the Stiftskirche in Baden-Baden, which played a crucial role in the thought of the Catholic writer Reinhold Schneider. Like St. Maria im Kapitol, the Stiftskirche was originally a Romanesque basilica built on Roman ruins, the baths erected by the late Roman emperors, which eventually came to hold the tombs of fourteen margraves, including that of Ludwig Wilhelm (1655–1707), also known as *der Türkenlouis* for his successful defense of the Holy Roman Empire against the Ottoman armies.[48]

Some German proponents of this version of the *Reichsidee*, however, tried to eradicate the Christian aspects of Roman Germany and venerated the pre-Christian *Germania* as the realm of pagan gods. Alfred Schuler, for instance, the mystic and radically anti-Christian leader of the Cosmic Circle, thought of himself as a reborn Roman of the late imperial era and frequently invoked the Roman Germany as an alternative and opposite to the Christian Germany. According to Schuler, Christianity had played a fateful role in the rationalization and disenchantment of European civilization. In a letter of 1898, addressed (but never delivered) to Empress Elisabeth II of Austria, Schuler wrote that already during his childhood in the Rhineland (he was born in Mainz), his thinking was entirely absorbed by ancient Rome: "alles Vergangene und Künftige, die ganze Katakombenwelt der Gegenwart schoß mir in diese eine Sonne — Roma."[49]

According to Schuler's friend and biographer Ludwig Klages, also a member of the Cosmic Circle, this world of catacombs was an integral

part of Schuler's homeland, Rhineland-Palatinate, which was full of material remains from ancient Rome.[50] It was no coincidence that George dedicated his poem "Porta Nigra" to the spirit of Alfred Schuler ("Ingenio Alf. Scolari"). He knew that Schuler was deeply attached to the relics of the imperial era in Trier, of which the Porta Nigra, a large Roman city gate, built between AD 186 and 200, was the most famous. It is in Trier that the lyrical "I" of George's poem discovers "den Gott *Augustus purpurn* auf dem goldenen Wagen!"[51] Schuler himself called Trier the jewel of Gaul, and the proud sister of Byzantium and Rome.[52]

Schuler's Roman conception of Europe transcended Curtius's "Rheinfranken" and George's "Lotharingen." It spanned from the Roman Rhine to the Roman Danube and included Bavaria as well as large parts of Austria.[53] Alongside his one-time companion (and fellow Kosmiker) George, Schuler considered Hugo von Hofmannsthal a representative of the Roman Europe. In a similar vein, the Austrian writer Hermann Broch pointed to the shared Latin roots of George's and Hofmannsthal's poetry:

> gleichwie das Rheinländische in George den lateinischen Einschlag nicht leugnete, fühlte sich das Österreichische in Hofmannsthal zutiefst dem Lateinischen verwandt, die lateinische Formstrenge samt der aus ihr erfließenden spezifischen 'Außen-Bestimmtheit' wurde zum Leitbild seines Schaffens.[54]

In his essay "George, Hofmannsthal und Calderon" (1934), Curtius distinguished between a Western and a Southern axis that defined Germany's relation to Romania. Allocating George to the Western and Hofmannsthal the Southern axis, he argued that both poets continued the cultural transfer between Germany and Romania that had begun in the Middle Ages and reached an erstwhile highpoint in the age of Goethe:

> So verschieden das Volkstum, das geistige Antlitz, die Kulturform dieser drei Länder [i.e., Italy, France, and Spain] ist, so stellen sie sich doch dem Blick des deutschen Volkes als ein großes gemeinsames Wesen dar, in dem er eine dreifache Ausprägung des Romanentums sieht. Das, was wir die Romania nennen, ist trotz seiner inneren Gliederung und Sonderung zusammengehalten durch das enge und feste Band der Sprachverwandtschaft. Diese sprachliche und geistige Romania grenzt im Westen und im Süden an den deutschen Raum . . . Aber man kann zugleich feststellen, daß der deutsche Geist, so oft die Berührung mit der Romanität in ihm geschichtlich produktiv wird, sowohl nach Frankreich wie nach Italien wie endlich auch nach dem iberischen Südwesten ausgreift. So war es im Mittelalter, so bei Goethe, so bei der Romantik. Und der Vorgang wiederholte sich um 1890, als Stefan George und Hugo von Hofmannsthal ihren Flug begannen.[55]

The European outlook of both Hofmannsthal and George, Curtius argued, was shaped not just by Rome, but also by Romania. Insofar as the culture of Romania incorporated much of the Christian tradition, the acknowledgment of this debt distinguished the two poets from the neopagan Schuler, whose vision of a Roman-European culture consistently and explicitly excluded the Christian Middle Ages. Hofmannsthal, in particular, drew much inspiration from the mediated and enriched culture of medieval and early modern Italy, notably Venice:

> Venedig — wie oft hat es Hofmannsthal Intuitionen von Grundgeheimnissen der Kunst und des Lebens geschenkt. Diese Stadt, wo Orient und Griechentum aus italienischer Substanz ein fremdes Märchenwunder machen; die der Spanier durch Verschwörung zu gewinnen hoffte; die nach einem Jahrtausend unvergleichbarer Staatskunst dem Korsen zur Beute fiel, bis die Restauration sie der habsburgischen Monarchie einfügte — diese Stadt, beladen mit ganz vergessener Völker Müdigkeiten, alle Tribute von Morgen- und Abendland dem Dom ihrer Seele einfügend wie in den inkrustierten Mauern von San Marco; diese Stadt scheint mir einziges Symbol für Hofmannsthals Verhältnis zur Romanität und für all das in ihm, wofür solcher Lebensbezug seinerseits wiederum nur Symbol war.[56]

This is not the place to discuss Hofmannsthal's attitude to Venice (or indeed Curtius's analysis of this attitude), which would require an in-depth examination of the Reichsidee in Habsburg Austria, its baroque universalism and Catholicism.[57] For the purpose of the present essay, Curtius's comments must suffice to highlight the peculiar attraction that the idea of a Roman Germany held for a particular segment of the Catholic intelligentsia of German-speaking Central Europe. Though his *Kunstreligion* had little to do with orthodox Christianity, Stefan George belonged to this segment and shared many of its ideas concerning Germany's role in Europe.

Franco-German Europe

For the proponents of the *Reichsidee*, the possibility of a united Western Europe hinged on the Franco-German question or what was sometimes called "das Rheinproblem." For many Catholic intellectuals in the Weimar era this was an intricate, but by no means insurmountable problem. "Das Rheinproblem und das europäische Problem," as a spokesman of the Rhenish Center Party remarked, "hängen aufs engste zusammen. Der Rhein ist zur Zeit eine Bruchlinie des europäischen Friedens; am Rhein aber ist noch das lebendig, was man die Idee des Abendlandes nennt."[58] The Christian existentialist philosopher Peter Wust, a contributor to the

Catholic monthly *Hochland* in the first half of the 1920s and later one of the foremost members of the Catholic opposition to Hitler, wondered aloud before a French friend: "Sollte es so undenkbar sein, daß wir . . . von der alten Kölner Kathedrale eine geistige Brücke hinüberbauen könnten zum alten Heiligtum von Notre-Dame, jene Brücke des Geistes, die tatsächlich einmal im 13. Jahrhundert bestanden hat?"[59] Like so many Catholic *Abendländler*, Wust invoked the unity of the Carolingian Empire during the Middle Ages, when the Rhine was a bridge, not a frontier, between the French and German nations, and St. Albertus Magnus (d. 1280) taught in Cologne, while his disciple St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) lectured in Paris.

Catholic convictions, however, did not necessarily translate into support for Franco-German rapprochement in the interwar discourse on the Reich. There were Catholics on both sides of the Rhine who invoked the river and its particular "genius" to buttress decidedly nationalistic ideologies. The pagan Roman foundations of the Reich, similarly, were called upon to legitimize France's right to rule the West or, alternatively, Germany's special status as a trans-European power. In his posthumously published *Weltgeschichte der Neuzeit, 1750–1950*, the Hamburg historian Otto Westphal, one of the principal champions of the imperial mythology in Nazi Germany,[60] singled out Maurice Barrès and Stefan George as representatives of this more aggressively xenophobic appropriation of the *Europaidee*. Both intellectuals, Westphal argued, were determined antipacifists, militantly nationalistic Catholics, and classicizing despots, equally committed to the visions of Plato, Dante, and Leo XIII. "Der 'génie du Rhin'," as Westphal laconically remarked, "war sich auf beiden Seiten in mehr als einem Zuge ähnlich."[61]

The case of Ernst Robert Curtius, by contrast, reveals the extent to which the "génie du Rhin" also inspired the belief in a shared Franco-German past and future. Curtius's relationship with the French dramatist and pacifist Romain Rolland was the diametrical opposite of that between George and Barrès. Curtius, who had no time for the tribal Catholicism espoused by right-wing intellectuals like Paul Claudel,[62] to say nothing of Barrès, was reading Rolland's *Jean-Christophe* (1904–12) while on his first journey to Rome. Under the influence of Rolland's ideas, he noted down the following desideratum: "Frankreich und Deutschland würden sich zusammenfinden — 'les deux ailes de l'Occident' — in einem neuen Europa." Curtius detected in Rolland's reflections the blueprint for a greater trans-European unity, born out of three millennia of Western history.[63] Around 1930, however, perhaps prompted by the bimillenary of Virgil's birth, Curtius began to discard this ideal of a Franco-German Europe and embraced ancient Rome as the true cradle and core of the Reich. In a 1945 announcement for his postwar masterpiece *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*,

he hailed the remnants of Rome both as testimony to a past imperial glory and as signs of hope for a new European future — just as George had done in "Porta Nigra."[64]

The myth of the Reich, thus, took on different forms and served different ideological purposes, and it was often a small step from one manifestation of the myth to another. The time for a truly European conception of the Reich came after 1945, but its intellectual origins, as we have seen, date back to the first half of the twentieth century. As early as 1912, in fact, Rolland had expressed the hope for a future unification of France and Germany under the sign of Rome. In a letter to Curtius, he wrote:

> Cette ville [i.e., Rome] qui a eu, dites-vous, sur votre vie une action décisive, elle a eue aussi sur moi . . . C'est de ces collines romaines qu'on embrasse le mieux le spectacle de notre Occident, et que nos nations divisées se fondent toutes en une harmonie pareille a celle qu'offre Rome, vue, le soir, du haut du Janicule.[65]

In opposition to this Europeanist appropriation of the *Reichsidee*, however, there was always the nationalist one. In 1914, Wolfskehl, writing on behalf of George, angrily rejected the pacifist offer of intellectual cooperation that Rolland had extended to the German writers. In the wake of the Great War, George repeatedly emphasized Germany's claim to European leadership, notably in his last collection of poems, *Das neue Reich* (1928). Some of his followers, such as Ernst Kantorowicz in his biography *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (1927), called for a *translatio imperii* in a strongly nationalist vein. Though he did not embrace National Socialism in 1933, George's conception of the reborn Reich could not easily be distinguished from the imperial mythologies of the Nazis. When in 1935, the ancient historian Wilhelm Weber said in his speech "Vom neuen Reich der Deutschen" that a *pax Germanica* would be Hitler's greatest gift to the world, he in many respects echoed George's views.[66]

Like George, Weber opposed French imperialism that he considered a continuation of the Roman colonization of Germany in ancient times:

> Das Erbe Roms ist die Rheinpolitik. Und die Saarentscheidung ist die gewonnene Schlacht Ariovists. . . . Rom verkündete den Frieden, die "pax Romana": Er schallt aus Millionen Mündern bis auf den heutigen Tag als völkerverführender Gesang. Denn Roms Friede war beglückend — für Rom. "Du bist ein Römer," Sicherheit der Herrschenden, Friede den Unterworfenen, Absterben völkischer Sonderart, Verbreitung römischer Stadtorganisation und ihrer zivilisatorischen Errungenschaften, Romanitas als Einheit über aller Mannigfaltigkeit, Einebnung und Vermischung, Durchsetzung aber auch der herrschenden Schicht mit allen kulturell angeglichenen und so der Tod der römischen Art, des italischen Volks: Wollen wir dies?[67]

The question, needless to say, was rhetorical. What Weber wanted was a *pax Germanica*, analogous to the *pax Latina* that French nationalists had demanded after the First World War. Only five years later, more than a few French idéologues of Europa would cooperate with the Nazis in the name of Rome and Charlemagne in their self-proclaimed mission to save the West. And after 1945, not only right-wing radicals would join in the acclamation of the former National Socialist Sigrid Hunke: "Das [dritte] Reich ist tot — es lebe das [dritte] Europa."[68]

Notes

[1] This essay was translated from the German by Danilo Scholz, Theodora Middleton, and Martin Ruehl.

[2] The collaborative volume *Karl der Große oder Charlemagne? Acht Antworten deutscher Geschichtsforscher* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1935) provides some insight into the contemporary controversies about Charlemagne; for a critical assessment of these debates, see Alessandro Barbero, "Interpretazioni di Carlo Magno nella crisi della democrazia tedesca (1933–1949)," *Il Mulino* 51 (2002): 23–32.

[3] Quoted in Friedrich Heer, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler: Anatomie einer politischen Religiosität* (Munich: Bechtle, 1968), 394.

[4] Heer, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler*, 236.

[5] Otto Westphal, *Das Reich: Aufgang und Vollendung*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1941), 239.

[6] Friedrich Hielscher, *Fünfzig Jahre unter Deutschen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1954), 470.

[7] Hermann Platz, *Um Rhein und Abendland* (Rothenfels am Main: Deutsches Quickbornhaus, 1924), 62.

[8] Richard Nikolaus von Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Pan-Europa*, 3rd ed. (Vienna: Pan-Europa Verlag, 1924), 119.

[9] Rudolf Pannwitz, "Flugblatt 3," in *Flugblätter 1–8* (Munich: Hans Carl, 1919–20).

[10] On Moenius, see Gregory Munro, "The Holy Roman Empire in German Roman Catholic Thought, 1929–33: Georg Moenius's Revival of Reichsideologie," *Journal of Religious History* 17, 4 (December 1993): 439–64. On the Catholic strand of the Reich ideology in the Weimar period more generally, see Klaus Breuning, *Die Vision des Reiches: Deutscher Katholizismus zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur (1929–1934)* (Munich: Hueber, 1969); see also Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag 1983), 222–43; Jost Hermand, *Der alte Traum vom neuen Reich: Völkische Utopien und Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenaeum Verlag, 1988), 157–95; and Lothar Kettenacker, "Der Mythos vom Reich," in *Mythos und Moderne*, ed. Karl-Heinz Bohrer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 261–89.

[11] Hans Weinzierl, "Herr von Papen proklamiert das sacrum imperium: Zum Besuch des Herrn Reichskanzlers in München," *Allgemeine Rundschau* 24 (1932): 644–45; here, 644.
[12] Weinzierl, "Herr von Papen proklamiert," 645.
[13] Wilhelm Hausenstein, *Pariser Erinnerungen aus fünf Jahren diplomatischen Dienstes 1950–1955* (Munich: Olzog, 1961), 99.
[14] Quoted in Arnulf Baring, *Außenpolitik in Adenauers Kanzlerdemokratie: Bonns Beitrag zur Europäischen Verteidigungsgemeinschaft* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1969), 50.
[15] Baring, *Außenpolitik in Adenauers Kanzlerdemokratie*. On the German Catholic conceptions of Europe in the immediate postwar period, see Marie-Emmanuelle Reytier, "Die deutschen Katholiken und der Gedanke der europäischen Einigung 1945–1949. Wende oder Kontinuität?," *Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte* 3 (2002): 163–84.
[16] Quoted in Baring, *Außenpolitik in Adenauers Kanzlerdemokratie*, 51.
[17] Hausenstein, *Pariser Erinnerungen*, 73.
[18] Richard Bie, *Das katholische Europa* (Leipzig: R. Voigtländer, 1931), 159 and 163.
[19] On Heer, see Evelyn Adunka, *Friedrich Heer. 1916–1983. Eine intellektuelle Biographie* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1995); Richard Faber and Sigurd Paul Scheichl, eds., *Die geistige Welt des Friedrich Heer* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2008); and Richard Faber, Carl Amery, Reinhard Knoll, *Offener Humanismus zwischen den Fronten des kalten Krieges: Über den Universalhistoriker, politischen Publizisten und religiösen Essayisten Friedrich Heer* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005).
[20] Friedrich Heer, *Das Experiment Europa: Tausend Jahre Christenheit*, 2nd ed. (Einsiedeln: Johannes-Verlag, 1952), 22.
[21] Heer, *Das Experiment Europa*, 26 and 24.
[22] Friedrich Heer, *Gespräch der Feinde* (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1949), 49.
[23] Theodor Haecker, *Werke,* vol. 5 (Munich: Kösel, 1967), 128.
[24] Friedrich Heer, *Das Heilige Römische Reich* (Bern: Scherz, 1967), 9.
[25] Haecker, *Werke*, 5:128 and 129. For the political appropriations of the concept "Abendland" since the interwar period, not least by German intellectuals, see Richard Faber, *Abendland. Ein "politischer Kampfbegriff,"* 2nd ed. (Berlin: Philo-Verlag, 2002).
[26] Otto von Österreich (Otto Habsburg), "Donau-Europa und Rhein-Europa," *Neues Abendland* 11 (1956): 311–22; here, 321.
[27] See, for instance, Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 1, *Die Grundlagen der neueren Geschichte* (Freiburg: Herder-Bücherei, 1964), 106.
[28] On Ziegler, see Timo Kölling, *Leopold Ziegler. Eine Schlüsselfigur im Umkreis des Denkens von Ernst Jünger und Friedrich Georg Jünger* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009); Martha Schneider-Fassbaender, *Leopold Ziegler. Leben und Werk* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1978); Paulus Wall, ed., *Leopold*

Ziegler. Weltzerfall und Menschwerdung (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001); and Paulus Wall, ed., *Mythos — Logos — Integrale Tradition. Beiträge zum Werk Leopold Zieglers aus Anlaß seines 50. Todestages* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009).

[29] Leopold Ziegler, *Das Heilige Reich der Deutschen*, 2 vols. (Darmstadt: Otto Reichl, 1925), vol. 1, 94.

[30] Reinhold Schneider and Leopold Ziegler, *Briefwechsel* (Munich: Kösel, 1960), 79–80.

[31] Ziegler, *Das Heilige Reich der Deutschen*, 95.

[32] Ziegler, *Das Heilige Reich der Deutschen*, 95.

[33] Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 131.

[34] Wilhelm Hausenstein, *Impressionen und Analysen: Letzte Aufzeichnungen*, ed. W. E. Süskind (Munich: Bruckmann, 1969), 58.

[35] Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: A. Francke, 1969), 20.

[36] Curtius, *Europäische Literatur*.

[37] Elisabeth Langgässer, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 2, *Das unauslöschliche Siegel* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1959), 325. On Langgässer, see Sonja Hilzinger, *Elisabeth Langgässer — Eine Biografie* (Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2009); and Daniel Hoffmann, "Elisabeth Langgässer. An den Grenzen des aufgeklärten Selbstbewußtseins," in *Eigensinn und Bindung. Katholische deutsche Intellektuelle im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans-Rüdiger Schwab (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker Verlag, 2009), 285–97.

[38] Wilhelm Hausenstein, *Pariser Erinnerungen: Aus fünf Jahren diplomatischen Dienstes, 1950–1955* (Munich: Olzog, 1961), 70–71.

[39] Hausenstein, *Pariser Erinnerungen*, 72.

[40] Platz, *Um Rhein und Abendland*, 19.

[41] Quoted in Baring, *Außenpolitik in Adenauers Kanzlerdemokratie*, 50.

[42] Ernst Robert Curtius, "Stefan George im Gespräch," in Curtius, *Kritische Essays zur europäischen Literatur*, 3rd ed. (Bern: A. Francke, 1963), 108.

[43] Curtius, "Stefan George im Gespräch." On George and Curtius, see Peter Godman, "Epilogue," in Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, new edition (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), 599–655, esp. 604, 613, 630.

[44] Ernst Gundolf, "George und die Alten," *Castrum Peregrini*, no. 7 (1952): 5–31; here, 9.

[45] *GA*, 6/7:199.

[46] Curtius, *Europäische Literatur*, 20.

[47] See Richard Faber, *Das ewige Rom oder: Die Stadt und der Erdkreis. Zur Archäologie "abendländischer" Globalisierung* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000). This notion — that European civilization ended with the Roman *limes* — was later criticized by the German politician Carlo Schmid. See C. Schmid, *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, vol. 2, *Europa und die Macht des Geistes* (Bern: Scherz, 1973), 33.

[48] See Reinhold Schneider, *Erfüllte Einsamkeit* (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1963), 105; and Reinhold Schneider, *Verhüllter Tag: Bekenntnis eines Lebens,* 3rd ed. (Freiburg: Herder-Bücherei, 1961), 15.

[49] Alfred Schuler, *Fragmente und Vorträge aus dem Nachlaß*, with an introduction by Ludwig Klages (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1940), 63. On Schuler, see Wolfgang Frommel, Marita Keilson Lauritz, and Karl Heinz Schuler, *Alfred Schuler. Drei Annäherungen* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini Presse, 1985); Baal Müller, ed., *Alfred Schuler. Der letzte Römer. Neue Beiträge zur Münchner Kosmik: Reventlow, Schuler, Wolfskehl u.a.* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini Presse, 2000); Michael Pauen, "Einheit und Ausgrenzung. Antisemitischer Neopaganismus bei Ludwig Klages und Alfred Schuler," in *Konfrontation und Koexistenz. Zur Geschichte des deutschen Judentums*, ed. Renate Heuer and Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus Verlag, 1996), 242–69; Michael Pauen, "Alfred Schuler: Heidentum und Heilsgeschichte," *Castrum Peregrini* 42 (1993): 21–54; Gerhard Plumpe, *Alfred Schuler. Chaos und Neubeginn. Zur Funktion des Mythos in der Moderne* (Berlin: Agora Verlag, 1978); Franz Wegener, *Alfred Schuler, der letzte deutsche Katharer. Gnosis, Nationalsozialismus und mystische Blutleuchte* (Gladbeck: Kulturförderverein Ruhrgebiet, 2003); Geog Dörr, *Muttermythos und Herrschaftsmythos: Zur Dialektik der Aufklärung um die Jahrhundertwende bei den Kosmikern, Stefan George und in der Frankfurter Schule* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007); and Richard Faber, *Männerrunde mit Gräfin: Die "Kosmiker" Derleth, George, Klages, Schuler, Wolfskehl und Franziska zu Reventlow* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), chapter 4.

[50] See Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner, "Der Haß gegen die Geschichte. Berauscht vom eschatologischen Denken: Alfred Schuler (1865–1923)," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 November 1965.

[51] *GA*, 6/7:16.

[52] Schuler, *Fragmente und Vorträge*, 27.

[53] See Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst: Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1930), 248.

[54] Hermann Broch, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6, *Dichten und Erkennen: Essays I*, ed. Hannah Arendt (Zürich: Rhein Verlag, 1955), 127.

[55] Curtius, *Kritische Essays*, 128.

[56] Curtius, *Kritische Essays*, 127.

[57] But see Richard Faber, *Die Verkündigung Vergils: Reich, Kirche, Staat; Zur Kritik der "Politischen Theologie"* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1975), 328–51.

[58] Hermann Platz, "Deutschland, Frankreich und die Idee des Abendlandes," *Flugschriften der Rheinischen Zentrumspartei* 2, no. 2 (1924): 15–46; here, 29.

[59] Peter Wust, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7, *Aufsätze und Briefe* (Münster: Regensberg, 1966), 179.

[60] Notably in his book *Das Reich: Aufstieg und Vollendung* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1941). On Westphal, see Peter Borowsky, "Geschichtswissenschaft an der Hamburger Universität 1933 bis 1945," in *Hochschulalltag im "Dritten*

Reich": Die Hamburger Universität 1933–1945, ed. Eckart Krause, Ludwig Huber, and Holger Fischer (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1991), 537–88.

[61] Otto Westphal, *Weltgeschichte der Neuzeit 1750–1950* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1953), 151.

[62] Ernst Robert Curtius, *Französischer Geist im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bern: A. Francke, 1952), 518.

[63] Curtius, *Französischer Geist* 515.

[64] Curtius, *Kritische Essays*, 439.

[65] Curtius, *Französischer Geist*, 515–16.

[66] Wilhelm Weber, *Vom Neuen Reich der Deutschen: Rede gehalten bei der Feier der Reichsgründung und der Erneuerung des Reichs durch den Führer am 30. Januar 1935* (Berlin: Preuss, 1935), 15 and 14.

[67] Weber, *Vom Neuen Reich der Deutschen*, 14.

[68] For a more detailed discussion of these issues, see Faber, *Das ewige Rom*, especially chapter 3.

11: From Secret Germany to Nazi Germany: The Politics of Art before and after 1933

Robert E. Norton

In 1927, the Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal gave a lecture at the University of Munich with the significantly untranslatable title "Das Schrifttum als geistiger Raum der Nation." One might reasonably render it as "Literature as the Spiritual Domain of a Nation." But it is notable that the first three operative words in the English version — namely, "literature," "spiritual," and "domain" — are of Latin origin, whereas the original words "Schrifttum," "geistig," and "Raum" are all unmistakably and intractably Germanic.[1] And that was, in part, the point of Hofmannsthal's lecture: he proposed that the literature of a people, the concentrated linguistic expression of its collective identity, was, or should be, the unique reflection of its characteristic qualities, indeed that it should be and preserve an abode in which the distinctive intellectual life of an entire people properly resided, where it found refuge, where it was most truly at home. But Hofmannsthal also argued that in an intact, well-functioning state or nation, there was a direct link between literature, or the vital intellectual tradition that constituted it, and the real world of actual events. "Der Raumbegriff, der aus diesem geistigen Ganzen emaniert," he explained, "ist identisch mit dem Geisterraum, den die Nation in ihrem eigenen Bewußtsein und in dem der Welt einnimmt. Nichts ist im politischen Leben der Nation Wirklichkeit, das nicht in ihrer Literatur als Geist vorhanden wäre, nichts enthält diese lebensvolle, traumlose Literatur, das sich nicht im Leben der Nation verwirklichte."[2] There was, Hofmannsthal thought, an unbroken ring uniting the spiritual life of a people as expressed in the writings of its intellectual leaders with the political experience of that people as expressed by the social reality of the state in which they live.

Or at least that was how things ideally ought to be. Hofmannsthal was speaking in 1927 and describing a state of affairs that he thought held true preeminently for France, but that, at that point, did not exist in Germany. The reasons why Hofmannsthal thought that was so are complex and occupy the bulk of his speech. But he was optimistic that, as in France, the day might yet come in Germany in which this synthesis would be achieved,

when, as he put it, "der Geist Leben wird und Leben Geist, mit anderen Worten: zu der politischen Erfassung des Geistigen und der geistigen des Politischen, zur Bildung einer wahren Nation."[3] It was a goal that Hofmannsthal thought remote but not unattainable. Like many among the German-speaking conservative elite, Hofmannsthal loathed the Weimar Republic, convinced that the democratic principles on which it rested, those late-blooming seeds sown by the Enlightenment, fundamentally conflicted with the nature of the people the government was supposed to represent. It was a situation that could only be intolerable to Hofmannsthal, who believed that a people could never flourish in the face of such a profound divide between its inner nature and its government, between its spirit and its state. Yet Hofmannsthal said he detected a movement under way that might wipe away what he felt were the superficial and alien principles of democracy, a countermovement that would rival not just the Enlightenment in its scope and effect, but would even compare with the Renaissance and Reformation in terms of its transformative influence, radically changing Germany and, with it, the entire European continent. "Der Prozeß, von dem ich rede," Hofmannsthal said, "ist nichts anderes als eine konservative Revolution von einem Umfange, wie die europäische Geschichte ihn nicht kennt. Ihr Ziel ist Form, eine neue deutsche Wirklichkeit, an der die ganze Nation teilnehmen könne."[4]

Hofmannsthal's speech is a remarkable document in a number of respects, not least of which is his almost uncanny ability to detect the early rumblings of a movement that would indeed begin to change Germany and Europe in profound and terrible ways just six years later. But just as striking, and no doubt also puzzling and implausible to most of us today in the early twenty-first century, is the degree of power and privilege Hofmannsthal granted to writing — that is, the sum of a people's intellectual or spiritual experience as manifested in its literary monuments — in its capacity to shape and influence reality. It may seem to us a quaintly naive belief, the rather hopeful dream of a man of letters who imagines that plays, poems, novels, and essays — in short, ideas — can really alter the world. Yet it was a belief shared by a great many of Hofmannsthal's contemporaries, a conviction that genuine art not only gave form and expression to certain truths, but also that artists themselves were both the guardians and exponents of those truths. Art occupied an exalted status in the minds of a broad spectrum of the German-speaking populace during the first third of the twentieth century, making it the object of a kind of devotion and fervor that had previously been reserved for religious observance. But few would have gone as far as Hofmannsthal in drawing a direct and necessary connection between the cultural and political fortunes of their country. On the contrary, many Germans had long prided themselves on their benign disinterest in politics, preferring to focus their energies instead on cultivating the inner realm. Nevertheless, in the decades leading

up to 1933 and during the twelve years that followed there was a concerted effort first to envision and then to enact the so-called "conservative revolution" described by Hofmannsthal, an attempt to harness politics in the service of art and art in the service of politics, with the aim of creating, as Hofmannsthal called it, "eine neue deutsche Wirklichkeit." An important, though in my view still greatly underappreciated, theoretical contribution toward this new reality was made by Stefan George and the members of his entourage. The better known and more practical implementation of that design was delivered by Adolf Hitler and his followers.

No doubt, many readers will find this juxtaposition at the very least surprising and perhaps even, on the face of it, outlandish, not to say offensive. How could it be that someone so relatively obscure could have played such a significant role in one of the most thoroughly studied periods in recent history? More pointedly, for those who do know something about George and his Circle, how could it be that an esoteric lyric poet and his cultivated friends, many of them poets themselves, could have been in any way connected to, much less an inspiration for, a brutal and murderous regime? Surely there must be some mistake, surely it is a gross exaggeration of George's importance or a vicious misrepresentation of his ideas to suggest that there could be any meaningful line that can be drawn between George's world of art and beauty and Hitler's realm of violence and death.

Several years ago, in 2002, I published a biographical study with the title *Secret Germany: Stefan George and His Circle*.[5] There are of course many reasons why one writes a book, and that general rule applied to me as well. I was attracted, first of all, to the form of biography itself, to the kinds of possibilities it offers the writer who values scrupulous research but who also is drawn to imaginative and narrative freedoms. Furthermore, for those of us who were unconvinced by poststructuralist assurances that the author was dead or that there was nothing outside of the text, biography represents one way to satisfy our secret desire to see literature as a vital part of a larger whole, while reflecting our conviction that literature makes no sense if one doesn't. But the main reason I wanted to write a book about Stefan George was that I felt it was the best and perhaps the only way I, as a literary scholar and intellectual historian, could responsibly address the central question that had been haunting me since I began studying German language and culture more than three decades ago. For Germanists, even for someone whose special field of research lies before or after, the events that took place between 1933 and 1945 are never entirely absent from mind, never completely obscured from view, as much as we try to caution ourselves about the dangers of drawing neat historical trajectories out of the chaos of the past or of retrospectively seeing inevitability in certain outcomes when there were, in truth, countless other possibilities that for whatever reason never coalesced. Whether one

acknowledges it or not, the twelve-year period of the Nazi reign hangs over modern German history like a dense, dark pall that never dissipates and casts a deep shadow over a vast territory in all directions. Still, because I had come as a student to love German literature and the German language, German philosophy and culture, I felt that I had to respond to the central catastrophe of National Socialism in a way that took the complexity of the phenomenon seriously but from a perspective that I as a cultural historian felt qualified to take. My attempt to understand Stefan George was fundamentally motivated by my need to understand how the culture that I had devoted my life to studying could have come close to annihilating itself and a good deal else besides.

At least outside Germany, George remains largely unknown, and ten, even five, years ago few would have heard of him, even in German-speaking countries. It comes as something of a shock to realize that today George and his "Circle" — though in reality there was no single Circle, but rather at best, so to speak, several Circles — have become almost fashionable again. Hardly a day goes by, it seems, on which his name is not mentioned in a newspaper or radio broadcast. In addition to my own biography, there is the German version by Thomas Karlauf, and Ulrich Raulff, the director of the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, won the 2010 Leipziger Buchmesse Prize in the nonfiction category for his book, *Kreis ohne Meister: Stefan Georges Nachleben*.[6] Even more recently Ernst Osterkamp, professor for German Literature at Humboldt University in Berlin, published *Poesie der leeren Mitte: Stefan Georges Neues Reich*. Osterkamp, who turns sixty this year, expresses his amazement at this turn of events, writing:

> Die plötzliche Wiederkehr Stefan Georges gehört zu den großen Überraschungen, die dem Autor dieses Buches in seinem Philologendasein widerfahren sind. Denn er hat seine akademische Sozialisation in Zeiten erfahren, in denen auf dem Namen Stefan George nahezu ein Anathema lag. Sein erstes Semester fiel in dem Winter 1968/69, und in diesen aufgeregten Zeiten repräsentierte . . . für die Studentenbewegung, der er sich durchaus zugehörig wusste, Stefan George all das, wogegen sie sich wandte. Ohnehin galt damals als ausgemacht, dass George mit seiner politisch-ästhetischen Position zu den Wegbereitern des "Dritten Reichs" zählte. Wer sich mit George jenseits des ideologiekritischen Holzfällertums befasste, sah sich dem Verdacht ausgesetzt, mit der Rechten zu paktieren. Wer unzweifelhaft der Linken angehörte und sich dennoch über George habilitierte, wurde mit dem noch schlimmeren Vorwurf des linken Ästhetizismus konfrontiert und steigerte seine Berufungschancen damit keineswegs. In dem auf das Jahr 1968 — das Jahr der hundertsten Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages — folgenden Vierteljahrhundert war Stefan George eine Figur der allerferntesten Literaturgeschichte und seine Wirkungslosigkeit nicht einmal diejenige eines Klassikers.[7]

But the virtual oblivion that enveloped him until only very recently belies his reputation during his life. George, it is true, achieved fame only slowly, known at first to a select, but influential, number of opinion makers just before and after the turn of the century in Germany: men of such stature as Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Wilhelm Dilthey, and Heinrich Wölfflin were all early admirers of George's art. But gradually he began to appeal to ever larger segments of German society, so that by the time the First World War began he was one of the most influential voices in the country; indeed, many soldiers carried George's poetry with them into the trenches. One reason for this is that just before the war, George's interests had increasingly turned away from the merely aesthetic realm of poetry and art and toward the political sphere. Whereas George had previously wanted to revitalize German poetry, he now wanted to remake all of Germany itself. One of the most revealing things George ever said regarding his view of poetry and of art more generally came when someone repeated a remark to him that Napoleon had supposedly once made: "J'aime le pouvoir comme artiste." Hearing this, George shot back: "J'aime l'art comme pouvoir."[8] Although it is true that George had always had a keen sense of the power inherent in poetry and in the poet, as time went on he sought to harness and wield that power to achieve nonpoetic ends.

It was a recipe that fit the times. Following the collapse of the monarchy in 1918 and the turbulence and despair countless Germans experienced in the absence of the centuries-old form of government it had embodied, George's vision began to seem to offer the best and perhaps only real hope for the future. It is one indication of his stature that when the city of Frankfurt inaugurated in 1927 what would be its annual Goethe prize, named in honor not just of the city's most famous son, but of the man many regarded as *the* exemplary, representative German, it was awarded first to George, followed in succeeding years by figures no less than Sigmund Freud, Albert Schweitzer, Karl Jaspers, and Thomas Mann. During the last twenty years of his life George came to be widely regarded as representing not only Germany's greatest cultural aspirations, but as exemplifying a way of living, offering a model that might serve as a guide or a template for the nation as a whole.

That model, or that way of living, is what George and his closest followers called their "geheimes Deutschland." Paradoxically, given his eventual rise to the level of national paragon, George had from the beginning hated every incarnation of the German state he was forced to endure: as a Catholic Rhinelander with strong ties to France, George had good reason to be hostile to the new empire ruled by Bismarck's Protestant Prussia. But, as happy as he was to see the Hohenzollern dynasty implode after the war, he detested the Weimar Republic even more. Not unlike many of his compatriots, George did not recognize, and was in fact contemptuous of,

the liberal principles of equality, individualism, personal autonomy, and liberty. Like the anarchists he admired, George reviled the values of the bourgeoisie: he despised their acquisitiveness and empty materialism, he scorned them for their lack of taste and decorum, and above all mocked them for their political pretensions. In their place, George imagined a new aristocratic class, an intellectual and cultural elite, who would enjoy a natural authority stemming from their superior attainments, providing sage guidance and rule, with a single, all-powerful figure, chosen by fate to serve as leader. And, indeed, George and his Circle, the poet and his group of devoted disciples, the "geheimes Deutschland," offered a kind of model of that form of governance: enthusiastic followers who unconditionally submitted themselves to the direction and will of their charismatic leader, who they believed possessed mysterious, even quasi-divine powers.

As the above makes obvious, I was originally interested in George not so much as a poet, but as arguably the most important, and certainly the most peculiar, cultural figure to have appeared during the first half of this century in Germany. But here we encounter the first of many paradoxes when dealing with George: while I have emphasized the larger, extrapoetic significance of his life, there is no other poet in the German tradition who was as exclusively and preeminently a poet as was George. Apart from a few and very undistinguished dramas he composed when he was a teenager and some scattered, programmatic fragments, George wrote nothing but poetry: no criticism, no essays, no stories or novels — in fact, virtually no prose at all. And despite the fame that did eventually come to him, there are few writers who more sought to avoid notoriety than did George. His earliest volumes of poetry were privately published, usually in exquisitely produced editions of one to two hundred copies that were distributed solely to friends and fellow poets; he gave virtually no public readings; he often responded to letters from strangers with silence; and he led a nomadic life, incessantly traveling from city to city, staying at the houses of friends, revealing his address only to those closest to him, and even then with conspicuous reluctance. And his poetry itself is considered extremely difficult: dense, laden with archaic or obscure words, hermetically self-referential, and, like the man who wrote it, seemingly remote from ordinary reality.

How is it then, one reasonably wonders, that Stefan George, the secretive center of the Secret Germany, came to assume such a visible and prominent place on the cultural stage of early twentieth-century Germany? At least part of the answer has to do precisely with the so-called "Kreis" that acknowledged him as its master and guide. The meaning of George's life was inextricably bound up in the lives and works of his friends and followers. When asked once what was more important, his poems or his friends, he unhesitatingly answered "meine Freunde."[9] George's ceaseless

travels always had visits with his friends as their goal, sometimes involving extended stays of several weeks or even months, sometimes only brief encounters of a few hours. And the nature of the visits varied from intimate conversations between George and just one or two other interlocutors, to somewhat larger informal gatherings in which everyone drank tea, reading and discussing poems, to elaborate costume parties, where the participants dressed as Homer, Dante, Virgil, and other luminaries from the past. And, throughout, there were always efforts to identify and recruit suitable young men to share the company, and incorporate the poetry, of George.

But there were also more formalized mechanisms in place that were responsible for disseminating the spirit of George. Many of his closest associates were men of extraordinary and varied talents — several were recognized scholars and professors at leading German universities who wrote pathbreaking books in fields such as history, philosophy, literature, and art, but also economics, law, and political science. Friedrich Gundolf, who met George in 1899, when Gundolf was eighteen, became probably the single most influential and certainly the closest personal disciple of George for two decades, and almost single-handedly transformed the study of literature in Germany with monographs on Shakespeare, Kleist, the Romantics, and Goethe.[10] It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the academic discipline of *Germanistik* in Germany consisted in a reaction to Gundolf for almost thirty years after his death in 1931. The historian Ernst Kantorowicz also made a small fortune with his controversial but powerful book on the last Hohenstaufen ruler, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II;[11] several years ago the medieval historian Norman Cantor still maintained that Kantorowicz's book was "the most exciting biography of a medieval monarch produced in this century."[12] And Ernst Bertram's book on Nietzsche, published in 1918 and subtitled *Versuch einer Mythologie*, established the image that an entire generation of educated middle-class Germans would form of the philosopher who, perhaps more than any other single thinker, has dominated the intellectual climate of the twentieth century.[13] Indeed, when Walter Kaufmann published his rehabilitation of Nietzsche in 1950, he claimed of Bertram's "mythology" that "no other book on Nietzsche left so decisive a mark on the literature."[14] Kaufmann primarily wrote in vigorous opposition to what he regarded as the harmful influence of Bertram — and, it almost goes without saying, of George himself. For not only had George been closely involved with the writing of these books, often even suggesting the topic to the author, discussing drafts of the manuscripts as they were being written, arranging for their publication, and reading and correcting page proofs; these exercises in hero-worship were also written, in a sense, as covert biographies of George. For, in addition to their overt historical — or rather mythologizing — import, the biographies of "great" men produced by members of the Circle were intended to establish an ideal lineage, at the end of which the Master stood: the progression,

at least as his disciples saw it, ran naturally from Frederick II through Goethe, Napoleon, and Nietzsche, to culminate finally in George himself.

It was through the offices of these and other talented proselytizers — and through their mythographic histories — that George and the cultural values he and his Circle espoused became absorbed by the larger reading public and assimilated particularly by the academic youth attending German universities from the turn of the century through to the end of the 1920s. (Gundolf taught at Heidelberg University, Kantorowicz in Frankfurt, Bertram in Bonn, Friedrich Wolters, who wrote the first and still only full-scale biography of George, taught in Marburg and Kiel, and still others, such as the now-forgotten but prolific historian Kurt Breysig, taught in Berlin.) But always at the center of all of these efforts was George himself, and it was the force of his personality, his need to exercise control over those around him, and the apparent willingness of those people to submit to his rule, that gave cohesion and a sense of purpose to the Circle. George's will to power, his desire to dominate, emerged during his early youth and never disappeared, but only gained in intensity. As a boy, he and a friend invented an imaginary kingdom, replete with ministers and a bureaucratic apparatus, even a system of currency: symptomatically, George appointed himself emperor of the realm.[15] In his early, tumultuous relationship with Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who evidently strongly felt and was frightened by George's attempt to assimilate him, this trait had already been sublimated into his self-perception as an artist. In a letter he wrote to Hofmannsthal after their association had ended, George expressed his regret that they had not been able to collaborate on common literary endeavors (although it must be said that George's idea of collaboration was, at best, idiosyncratic), adding that they could have maintained a "salutary dictatorship" over literature with their works.[16] Hofmannsthal undoubtedly understood that there could be no more than one dictator in any dictatorship, and that it was unlikely to be him.

But, of course, the primary source of George's attraction and power was his poetry itself. George wielded the German language, and specifically the poetic idiom, with singular virtuosity, and he was able to create verses saturated with erotic longing, images that evoked a naive, almost childlike simplicity, descriptions that rendered natural phenomena in new and unexpected ways, and words that were mysteriously, musically arresting. Yet George reserved some of his most extraordinary language for poems that violently condemned the modern world and seemed to call for its utter destruction. One of the most startling examples of this sort can be found in a collection called *Der Stern des Bundes* (1914), which appeared only a few months before the outbreak of the First World War. Evoking the biblical tale of the Tower of Babel, and all of its connotations of human hubris and self-destructive folly, the poetic voice seems to merge with the divine one in pronouncing a judgment of ruin and death:

Ihr baut verbrechende an maass und grenze:
>Was hoch ist kann auch höher!< doch kein fund
Kein stütz und flick mehr dient . . . es wankt der bau.
Und an der weisheit end ruft ihr zum himmel:
>Was tun eh wir im eignen schutt ersticken
Eh eignes spukgebild das hirn uns zehrt?<
Der lacht: zu spät für stillstand und arznei!
Zehntausend muss der heilige wahnsinn schlagen
Zehntausend muss die heilige seuche raffen
Zehntausende der heilige krieg.[17]

In this poem George sounds in exemplary fashion a theme that he had first struck just after the turn of the century and to which he repeatedly, almost obsessively, returned thereafter: that the modern world was irretrievably corrupt and unsound, that it had been so completely choked by material excess, so drained of vitality by an overreliance on the inventions of science and reason, that no positive remedy could save humanity from its impending downfall. The only solution, as those last three terrible lines suggest, was to accept the inevitable annihilation when it came — the tens of thousands who would be consumed in the coming "holy war" — and to start anew.

The ideal, or the hope, was that a powerful figure would emerge who would lead those few survivors worth saving toward the realization of a more authentic life. In many respects, both in the imagined world of his poetry and in the only slightly less imaginary realm of his Secret Germany, George provided the character, symbolism, and even the vocabulary of such a leader. The Master sought to imprint his personality onto everything he did, beginning with the careful management of the individuals in his Circle (he forbade many of them, for example, to associate independently with one another without consulting him first), and extending to the invention of a typeface based on his own handwriting for the publication of his works and those of his followers. George even practiced his own system of punctuation and spelling, dispensing with capital letters of nouns and other conventions of German grammar, thus forcing even these most elemental forms of expression to submit to his own will. The result was that, when the works of his disciples were published using George's typeface and punctuation, they nevertheless seemed to be even in physical appearance extensions of his own personality. This urge to control his intellectual and physical environment, even to subjugate it to a form of his own making, took many expressions: George began his career in 1892 by editing a literary journal, the *Blätter für die Kunst*, which continued to appear until 1919. Although he had a coeditor and collaborator by the name of Carl August Klein, the final decision to publish or reject a poem or essay rested mainly, and as time went on solely, with George.[18] Just before and following the First World War, all of the books that the follow-

ers of George wrote were issued from the firm of Georg Bondi in Berlin, who was George's first and only publisher, and these books always had to be read and approved by George himself before they were accepted. They all had a similar appearance as well: the books were uniformly bound in dark blue covers, with gold trim and lettering, sometimes adorned on the title page with a simple line drawing using ancient or medieval architectural elements as a frame. But the most important element, the badge of identification signaling true membership to the circle, was the circular emblem embossed on the cover and title pages with the words "Aus dem Kreise der Blätter für die Kunst" running around the border, at the center of which one sees the unmistakable form of a swastika.

There has yet to be written a complete history of this symbol,[19] but we do know that in his excavations of Troy in the 1860s and 1870s, Heinrich Schliemann encountered ancient Greek artifacts ornamented with, among other things, swastikas.[20] Undoubtedly, primarily because of this association with the ancient Greeks, whom Germans liked to think of as their true cultural and intellectual ancestors, an early colleague of George by the name of Alfred Schuler, decided in the mid-1890s to use this symbol to decorate his works; in fact, at one point he even considered using it in place of his own name. Swastikas thus began to be incorporated as decorative motifs into the works of George and his disciples by the first decade of the new century. The first time it appeared on a work associated with the *Blätter für die Kunst* was in the translation of Shakespeare that Gundolf published, beginning in 1909. And the first time the stylized swastika appeared with the name of the journal encircling it was also in conjunction with another one of Gundolf's works: his *Goethe* of 1916. This symbol continued to be used to identify the works of the George Circle even after the poet's death. As the Nazis made their rise to power, George's publisher Georg Bondi issued a pamphlet insisting that its use of the swastika had no connection to any political party and in fact had no political significance at all, while at the same time nevertheless announcing a refusal to stop using it to adorn the books of the Circle.[21] In retrospect, it is hard not to see the stance implied by this statement as naive at best, and at worst as opportunistically disingenuous.

It was just this sort of confusion of aesthetic and political symbolism, however, that lay at the heart of George's appeal, and even contributed to his own self-understanding. As I mentioned earlier, after the turn of the century, George's ambition to impose his own order on people and things increasingly left the purely aesthetic or artistic realm and he began to look with interest to the larger sphere of political affairs. Just before the war, he and two of his closest followers — Friedrich Wolters and Gundolf — founded a journal called *Das Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung*, which was designed to address nonliterary subjects and also, perhaps not entirely incidentally, featured a more familiar swastika with straight, instead of, as

previously, circular arms on its rear cover. In 1916, in apparent seriousness, George said to one of his friends that, if the post were offered to him, he would consider serving as the chancellor of Germany.[22] Increasingly, during the 1920s, George and his followers began to speak in nebulous ways of the necessity of some "Tat" or deed that, although never more narrowly defined, would, they hoped, jolt the German people out of the malaise created by the defeat during the war. And during this decade the name that the insiders gave to the group around George was not "der Kreis" but "der Staat." While the reference was more to Plato than to present political realities, the ambiguity was intended. And it was a parallel constellation that the reading public readily understood. In 1928, George published his last volume of poetry, portentously titled *Das neue Reich*, and in 1933 more than one newspaper ran headlines such as the following: "Stefan George der Künder, Adolf Hitler der Führer."[23]

As I indicated at the outset, it has been my intention to draw this parallel all along, emphasizing especially those aspects of George's personality, views, and career that seem to be echoed most strongly by later events. But I want to push that parallel even further and to suggest that Hitler in fact occupied, both in his own mind and in that of countless Germans at the time, a space — or, if you will, a realm — that had been created in part by Stefan George. That is, I do not believe that George actually influenced Hitler directly, nor do I think that Hitler deliberately or even consciously appropriated any particular ideas from George or his followers. For one thing, the large number of Jews among George's followers made such an overt connection seem less than expedient. But I am convinced that it was owing in no small measure to the extraordinary prestige, even veneration, that George enjoyed among his German contemporaries that it was possible for Hitler to benefit from the conflation of aesthetic and political authority George represented in the public mind and for Hitler's form of rule to enjoy the legitimacy it did.

For most of us, the suggestion that Hitler was the natural or logical heir of a poet, that Hitler thought of himself and his role primarily in artistic terms, or that Hitler was anything other than a deranged homicidal maniac — even though there is little doubt that he was that — would seem bizarre, at best, and most likely vaguely repugnant, or worse. Hitler is regarded, after all, as the very incarnation of evil, a moral monster who represents the extreme antithesis of what we normally consider as the humane and civilized pursuits of a poet. Yet, as we learn in a fascinating though unsettling book published in 2002 by Frederic Spotts entitled *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, the ambitions of the Nazi dictator were largely, although certainly not exclusively, channeled through and expressed in the arts. The following comment, which Hitler made during the Second World War, is representative of his view of himself and one that he repeated over and over again:

> I became a politician against my will. For me politics are only a means to an end. There are people who believe that it will be difficult for me no longer to be active. No! It will be the most beautiful day of my life when I retire from political affairs and leave all the worries, troubles and vexations behind me. . . . If someone else had been found, I would never have gone into politics; I would have become an artist or philosopher.[24]

It would be easy to dismiss this comment as a self-justifying cover for a mass murderer, or as the pitiful delusion of the failed painter everyone knows Hitler to have been. But Spotts shows that Hitler's interest in and command of aesthetic matters was neither superficial nor merely cynical. Rather, Hitler's involvement in the arts was genuine, sustained, and often startlingly sophisticated. Although he did employ art as part of his propaganda machine to further his political agenda, to imagine that Hitler's engagement with art went no deeper than that would be to confuse cause and effect. The truth is much more complex and troubling.

Ironically, though perhaps understandably enough, previous accounts have portrayed Hitler as a kind of nonperson, as an empty shell with no inner life to speak of, and they certainly have not taken him seriously as an alert, knowledgeable, and even impassioned participant in cultural affairs. Spotts points out that in Ian Kershaw's recent and otherwise magisterial biography of Hitler, hardly a word is said about this aspect of his life. Indeed, it is dismissed out of hand. Compared to Napoleon, Bismarck, Churchill, and Kennedy, who Kershaw claims were "figures of substance outside their public lives," Kershaw states that "outside politics Hitler's life was largely a void."[25]

Yet the evidence to the contrary is overwhelming. Throughout his rule, no matter how dire the political or military situation became, Hitler remained deeply committed to artistic concerns. Many eyewitness reports show him to have been interested in little else, and except during military briefings he spoke almost exclusively, even obsessively, about the arts. Spotts cites countless examples from Goebbels's diaries. One typical entry reads: "I cannot enumerate all the cultural issues we discussed." At virtually every meeting, the pattern was the same. "The intensity of the Führer's longing for music, theater, and cultural relaxation is enormous," Goebbels wrote after a visit to the Eastern Front in 1942, "He said he never speaks of this to others, but he could tell me that the life he is now leading is culturally empty and inconsequential, and therefore he has to fill his days with work and other activities. Once the war was over he would compensate for this by a dedication stronger than ever to the more beautiful sides of life." Four months later, as the Russian campaign raged, Hitler engaged Goebbels in a conversation about cultural matters that lasted an entire afternoon. The subject was a film about King Ludwig I of Bavaria. Despite the demands of the military operations that would shift the balance of the

war, Hitler found the time to read and comment on the script of the film, deciding that he could not approve it or the proposed cast, and ordered the project to begin from scratch. He went on to discuss musical competitions in Vienna, Linz, and Munich, noting that new tape-recording technology allowed him to keep abreast of current developments in performance and conducting styles. He even remarked on the differences in quality among various musical ensembles, and in particular singling out the "thrilling" performances being delivered at the Munich Opera. He observed that several well-known singers were fading vocally and mused about possible successors. He spoke about his favorite, Richard Wagner, and his descendants, using the opportunity to issue guidelines for the retirement provisions of older artists, and at the same time earmarking precious state funds to buy a collection of rare musical instruments from Italy. And that was one conversation.[26]

Similarly, half a year later, as the battle of Stalingrad raged, Goebbels visited Hitler at the military headquarters at Rastenburg in East Prussia. "Despite the gravity of the situation," Goebbels confided to his diary, "the Führer remains as devoted as ever to the arts and cannot wait for the moment when he can devote more time to them." Goebbels noted that the conversation began with Hitler detailing his appreciation of Bruckner's symphonies and ended with a comparative discussion of the philosophies of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche (*HPA*, 12).

In May of 1943, as Allied bombers were systematically targeting German cities for destruction and the Wehrmacht had been routed in Russia and Africa, Hitler stopped in Berlin on a four-day sojourn, during which he addressed, as Goebbels reported, "a variety of cultural and artistic questions." This is Spotts's summary of the transcript of those four days of meetings:

> In the visual arts, it was the need to encourage individuals to buy paintings for themselves and not leave it up to art museums to acquire them [with which Hitler was preoccupied]. He also wanted art galleries to be run by the community not the Reich. He went on to render his judgment about architects and sculptors. After discussing problems of the Berlin theatre, he turned to the world of music. He ordered that the Hamburg Symphony, the Gewandhaus Orchestra and the orchestra of the German Opera in Berlin should be given increased status and that a newly created Bruckner Orchestra in Linz was to be turned into one of the very best in the Reich. He scotched a proposal to increase the price of theatre and opera tickets. He lamented the lack of cultural sensibility on the part of local party leaders; for all their political competence, he complained, many were "complete failures in the field of the arts." He also fretted about Frederick the Great's coffin and decided that after the war it should be moved either to Sanssouci or a new mausoleum in Berlin. (*HPA*, 12–13)

On and on it goes: Spotts meticulously documents how, as the military situation became ever more catastrophic, after the invasion of Italy and then its surrender, during the relentless bombing of German cities, Hitler always returned to and focused on artistic concerns in his conversations. Following an exchange in which a possible peace settlement was considered, for instance, he then turned with obvious relish to the topics of operatic and theatrical life in Berlin and Munich, the political fickleness of artists, Hermann Göring's aesthetic vacuity and Göring's wife's meddlesomeness in Berlin theater, and other related matters. Even on the eve of D-Day, on 5 June 1944, Hitler was absorbed to the point of distraction by his consuming interest. That evening, he was at the Berghof with an assortment of guests who were subjected to a lengthy discussion on the arts. Goebbels was present as well and noted that: "We talked about problems of the theater and opera, film, literature and heaven knows what else." Even though information gleaned from radio intercepts indicating an imminent Allied invasion was relayed to the Führer, he gave no indication of concern. "Later on," Goebbels wrote, "we looked at the latest newsreels . . . and talked a lot about film, opera and theatre matters" (*HPA*, 14).

In terms of his policies as well, Hitler made allowances for art and artists that underscored their exceptional importance to him, even when considerable sacrifices were necessary to uphold them. Thus, just before the invasion of Poland in 1939, Hitler decreed that all artists be exempt from military service so that no interruption in German cultural life would occur. It was a privilege extended to no other class or profession, including scientists. Even as losses mounted during the course of the war and replacements were badly needed, Hitler refused to back down in the face of urgent demands from his generals to release artists to active duty. His particular fondness for opera led to similar internal conflicts as the costs of the war rose. Albert Speer tells us that "the bombing of an opera house pained him more than the destruction of whole residential quarters." Thus, wherever an opera house was destroyed — as in Berlin with the State Opera in 1941 and the German Opera in 1943, in Mainz and Saarbrücken in 1942 and in Munich in 1943 — he demanded that they be rebuilt immediately. His advisors argued against this move, but to no avail: "Of course," Goebbels noted in his diary, "all this opera house construction means a loss of material for war production; but so be it" (*HPA*, 86, 286–87).

And so it continued until the very end. There is a famous photograph of Hitler gazing at an enormous model of his reconstruction plan for his home town of Linz. I again quote Spotts's commentary of this striking image:

> The model shows the city as it will look after being transformed into the culture centre of Europe. It had been delivered the day before and

> lighting arrangements were installed to enable him to envisage how the buildings would appear at various times of the day as well as by moonlight. The date is February 13, 1945. The place is the bunker under the Reich chancellery in Berlin. The Russians are at the Oder, a hundred miles away; the British and Americans are near the Rhine some 300 miles to the west. Yet Hitler spends hours absorbed in his model. He worries that the bell tower in the centre of town may be too tall; it must not eclipse the spire of the cathedral at Ulm further up the Danube since that would hurt the pride of the people living there. But it must be high enough to catch the first beams of the sun in the morning and the last in the evening. "In the tower I want a carillon to play — not every day but on special days — a theme from Bruckner's Fourth, the Romantic Symphony," he tells his architect. During the weeks and months to follow, the model will continue to offer him solace, even as his Reich — and it was his Reich — collapses around him. (*HPA*, xi)

We may also recall that on the night when this photograph was taken, 13 February 1945, Dresden, the celebrated "Florence on the Elbe," a center of the German Romantic movement and one of the loveliest cities in Europe, collapsed under devastating aerial bombardment in ruins and flames.

There can be no doubt that Hitler truly thought of himself and his regime as the defenders of civilization, as agents of culture. In a speech in 1938, he proclaimed: "The world will come to Germany and convince itself that Germany has become the guardian of European culture and civilization." And in 1941, he said of himself: "If I were to assess my work, I would first emphasize that in the face of an uncomprehending world I succeeded in making the racial idea the basis of life, and second that I made culture the driving force in German greatness" (*HPA*, 29). And therein lies the mysterious, disquieting paradox. How is it possible for someone so obviously and genuinely devoted to art and culture to simultaneously commit the most unfathomable crimes and enable the destruction of life and property on unprecedented scale?

In one of the T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures that George Steiner gave in 1970, which he collected and published under the title *In Bluebeard's Castle*, Steiner noted that:

> There have been few attempts to relate the dominant phenomenon of twentieth-century barbarism to a more general theory of culture. Not very many have asked, or pressed home the question, as to the internal relations between the structures of the inhuman and the surrounding, contemporary matrix of high civilization. Yet the barbarism which we have undergone reflects, at numerous and precise points, the culture which it sprang from and set out to desecrate. Art, intellectual pursuits, the development of the natural sciences, many

> branches of scholarship flourished in close spatial, temporal proximity to massacre and death camps. It is the structure and meaning of that proximity which must be looked at. Why did humanistic traditions and models of conduct prove so fragile a barrier against political bestiality? In fact, were they a barrier, or is it more realistic to perceive in humanistic culture express solicitations of authoritarian rule and cruelty?[27]

Steiner's prose becomes uncharacteristically opaque in this last, crucial question, almost if, at the last moment, he were shying away from the very insight he had been working toward. For the truly hard question is not whether, as Steiner deflectively puts it, humanistic culture — Western civilization — may have merely made room for barbarism, that it may have only extended "solicitations" to totalitarianism and genocide. Rather, the more difficult question is whether those very impulses were not there from the very start, whether humanistic culture itself did not only fail in preventing its self-destruction, but also provided the essential ingredients that led to its own ruin. We know that art offers no haven from inhumanity. But our long tradition of associating the beautiful with the good, the almost reflexive impulse to impute virtue to aesthetic excellence, makes it difficult to accept that art can, and does, harbor viciousness. We have to confront the reality that Hitler carried out his designs not only in the name of racial theories about the superiority of German or "Aryan" peoples and the utter worthlessness of Jews and of a whole host of others, but also that he saw himself as acting in the service of art, that Hitler conceived of himself as a promoter and defender of beauty and culture. If I am correct in suggesting that Stefan George played an important role — though far from the only one — in laying the intellectual groundwork of merging the aesthetic with the political in fashioning the idea of a new German order, then it seems reasonable to propose, though hard to accept, that Adolf Hitler took the next step by attempting to transform some version of that idea into reality. If so, it would have been an unintended and, one expects, unhoped-for fulfillment of the prescription for a "true nation" that Hofmannsthal had given in his speech on "Das Schrifttum als geistiger Raum der Nation" — namely, when "der Geist Leben wird und Leben Geist, mit anderen Worten: zu der politischen Erfassung des Geistigen und der geistigen des Politischen."

Notes

[1] "Schrifttum" is actually composed of the noun "Schrift," or "writing," which is derived from the Latin "scribere," and the Germanic suffix "-tum," equivalent to the English "-dom," producing an amalgam that has no correspondent in English.

[2] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Bernd Schoeller and Ingeborg Beyer-Ahlert, vol. 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1980), 27.
[3] Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke*, 10:40.
[4] Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke*, 10:41.
[5] Robert E. Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and His Circle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2002).
[6] Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister: Stefan Georges Nachleben; Eine abgründige Geschichte* (Munich: Beck, 2009).
[7] Ernst Osterkamp, *Poesie der leeren Mitte: Stefan Georges Neues Reich* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2010), 12–13.
[8] Robert Boehringer, *Mein Bild von Stefan George*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1967), 46.
[9] Edgar Salin, *Um Stefan George: Erinnerung und Zeugnis* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1954), 62.
[10] Friedrich Gundolf, *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1911); Friedrich Gundolf, *Heinrich von Kleist* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1922); Friedrich Gundolf, *Romantiker* (Berlin: H. Keller, 1930–31); Friedrich Gundolf, *Goethe* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1922).
[11] Ernst Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1927).
[12] Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), 85.
[13] Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1922).
[14] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974), 15. See my introduction to *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology*, by Ernst Bertram, trans. Robert E. Norton (Champaign: U of Illinois P, 2009).
[15] Robert Boehringer, *Mein Bild von Stefan George*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper, 1967), 201.
[16] *Briefwechsel zwischen George und Hofmannsthal*, ed. Robert Boehringer, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1953), 150.
[17] *GA*, 8:31.
[18] Carl August Klein. *Die Sendung Stefan Georges* (Berlin: Die Rabenpresse, 1935).
[19] But see Horst Heidtmann, "Swastika," in *Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*, ed. Christian Zentner and Friedemann Bedürftig, transl. Amy Hackett (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 937–39; Malcolm Quinn, *The Swastika: Constructing the Symbol* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Steven Heller, *The Swastika: Symbol Beyond Redemption?* (New York: Allworth Press, 2000).
[20] Heinrich Schliemann, *Troy and its Remains: A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries Made on the Site of Ilium and in the Trojan Plain*, ed. Philip Smith (London: John Murray, 1875). See especially Plates XXIV–XXVIII.

[21] Bernhard Zeller, Werner Volke, and Gerhard Hay, eds., *Stefan George, 1868–1968: Der Dichter und sein Kreis; Eine Ausstellung des Deutschen Literaturarchivs im Schiller-Nationalmuseum Marbach a.N.* (Munich: Kösel, 1968), 399.
[22] Kurt Breysig, "Stefan George: Gespräche, Dokumente," *Castrum Peregrini* 42 (1960): 26–28, 44–45.
[23] "Stefan George der Künder, Adolf Hitler der Führer," *Der Angriff*, 5 December 1933.
[24] Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (Woodstock and New York: Overlook Press, 2003), 8. A new book on the same subject, which I have not yet seen, is Birgit Schwarz, *Geniewahn: Hitler und die Kunst* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009).
[25] Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889–1936: Hubris* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), xiii.
[26] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 11, 12. Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *HPA* and page number.
[27] George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes toward the Redefinition of Culture* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1971), 29–30.

12: The George Circle and National Socialism

Peter Hoffmann

Introduction

Stefan George declared himself a revolutionary.[1] When Ernst Robert Curtius visited him on 16 April 1911, George remarked: "Manche meinen, in meinen Büchern sei nur Künstlerisches enthalten, nicht der Wille zum neuen Menschlichen. Ganz falsch! *Algabal* ist ein revolutionäres Buch." In 1919, again in conversation with Curtius, George described his books as prophetic, explaining that *Geist* always found the necessary solutions first, and that events lagged behind.[2] But which solutions did George have in mind, and which events might be said to have resulted from them? Did he call for "spirits from the vasty deep," and did they come?[3] Were these solutions, as certain terminological congruences suggest, proto- or para-National Socialist? Were they *völkisch* and antisemitic?

George's own statements on these points are not numerous, but rather conclusive. If it is accepted that the Master controlled, authorized, and authenticated the principal published utterances of his friends, and if it is accepted that his friends could not be friends unless they essentially represented his views,[4] then the most prominent examples of these views will be sufficiently representative. They reveal affinities between the ideas of the George Circle and *völkisch* nationalism; between George's claim to political leadership and the *Führer* principle; and they point up shared assumptions regarding racial discrimination. They have to be set in the context of those remarks made by members of the Circle that highlight the fundamental differences between the views espoused in the Circle and those of National Socialism as well as the völkisch and the antisemitic movements.[5]

George and *Völkisch* Nationalism

The term *völkisch* occurred in the fifteenth century as a simple translation of *popularis*, but in 1811 Johann Gottlieb Fichte gave it a radical political

meaning: "deutsch heiszt schon der Wortbedeutung nach völkisch" and, based on his own *Wissenschaftslehre*, "Der eigene und selbständige Grundmensch ist ein Deutscher; der als Nachbild eines andern lebendigen Seins in der Mitwelt oder Vorwelt Gebildete ist ein Fremder, Glied eines Ganzen, in welchem er nicht ist, oder welches vielleicht überhaupt nicht mehr ist."[6] A person of non-German descent thus was not *völkisch* but *volksfremd*.

Friedrich Schlegel recognized the implications of this German version of nationalism, when he wrote to Johannes Veit on 18 August 1815 about the dangers facing Germany: "Wahr ist indessen, daß eine, in mehreren deutschen Ländern, vorzüglich aber in Preußen verbreitete, zahlreiche Parthey, die den Fanatismus des Volksthums auf der Oberfläche, im Herzen aber zerstörende Zwietracht und Eroberungssucht trägt, uns mit mancher Besorgniß für die Zukunft erfüllt."[7]

In 1875 Hermann von Pfister-Schwaighusen, the Austrian Germanist, proposed *völkisch* as the German word for "national."[8] The term soon gained wider currency. Although Hitler later rejected it as too vague, he employed it. He defined a *völkische Weltanschauung* as one that acknowledged the racial organization of the human species, in which the better and stronger races had to ensure the subordination of the weaker ones. The better race was the one that was *völkisch*, or *deutsch*. The *völkische Weltanschauung* had to prove its superiority in the struggle against the representatives of the *internationale Weltanschauung* — that is, Jews and Marxists.[9]

The term "national" does not occur in Stefan George's works. But the term *völkisch* occurs once, in the poem "Der Dichter in Zeiten der Wirren," which bears the dedication "Dem Andenken des Grafen Uxkull" (written after July 1918, published 1921).[10] Here George, as "der Dichter in Zeiten der Wirren," announces that those chosen for the highest achievements first traversed the lowest wasteland, and that he had raised a young generation for a brighter future:

Ein jung geschlecht das wieder mensch und ding
Mit echten maassen misst • das schön und ernst
Froh seiner einzigkeit • vor Fremdem stolz •
Sich gleich entfernt von klippen dreisten dünkels
Wie seichtem sumpf erlogner brüderei
Das von sich spie was mürb und feig und lau
Das aus geweihtem träumen tun und dulden
Den einzigen der hilft den Mann gebiert . .
Der sprengt die ketten fegt auf trümmerstätten
Die ordnung • geisselt die verlaufnen heim
Ins ewige recht wo grosses wiederum gross ist
Herr wiederum herr • zucht wiederum zucht • er heftet
Das wahre sinnbild auf das völkische banner

> Er führt durch sturm und grausige signale
> Des frührots seiner treuen schar zum werk
> Des wachen tags und pflanzt das Neue Reich.[11]

The poem is fraught with references to war: the leader is guiding his loyal troops through stormy weather, horrifying signals, the early morning dawn. *Völkisch* thus appears in a wholly warlike context. This point is made even more explicitly in the nonpoetic language of Max Kommerell's works, which had been approved by the Master, and in Walter Anton's violent outbursts, to which he did not object.

The "true sign" on the *völkisch* banner is not identified as the swastika, but nothing is known about any alternative. Between 1916 and 1934, no less than eighteen books written by members and associates of the Circle carried a swastika vignette on their covers and title pages. In 1928, the publisher of these books, Georg Bondi, issued a statement, authorized by George, in which he dissociated the swastika emblazoned on the *Kreisbücher* from the *Hakenkreuz* of the National Socialists:

> als dieses uralte (indische) zeichen im oktober 1918 "hakenkreuz" benannt wurde und seinen heutigen sinn bekam, konnte der kreis der blätter für die kunst sein seit vielen jahren eingeführtes signum nicht abschaffen. wer die unter diesem zeichen veröffentlichten bücher auch nur flüchtig kennt, dürfte wissen, dass sie mit politik nichts zu tun haben.[12]

This was self-delusional, or disingenuous. George had concerned himself with political ideas for many years. In 1920 he told Berthold Vallentin that he intended to take a political stance in a new *Jahrbuch*.[13] But George's attitude changed after 1928. He is not on record as having favored any particular political party or movement before 1928. But after the national elections and the electoral successes of the National Socialists in 1930, and even more after Hitler had become Chancellor in 1933, George's utterances on politics assumed an unequivocal directness and in some cases openly expressed his support of the National Socialists. In 1933 he acknowledged that he was the forefather of the new national movement, National Socialism, and as will be argued below, he did not even exclude his collaboration. Although George had always had political intentions, the change in emphasis and the acknowledgment of his affinity to National Socialism will be shown to be documented by the works of his disciples.

Max Kommerell explained in his book *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik. Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, Hölderlin* (1928), which had been approved by George, that the deification of the entire nation in war was the secret to Germany's future revival, as Hölderlin had recognised: "Den Krieg hat dieser lebensscheu gescholtene Dichter [. . .] unerschrocken als oberste völkische Wirklichkeit gepriesen . . freilich

nur d e n Krieg den ein erwachtes Volk führt."[14] Furthermore, Kommerell concluded: "Volk in diesem Sinn kann in einem Zeitalter nur e i n e s sein . . alle andern Völker sind dann Völker zweiten Grades, unter denen es steht wie der Held unter Menschen gemeinen Ausmaßes." He relegated all other nations to the second rank.[15] In Kommerell's book as well as in George's poem, *völkisch* denoted war, domination, and exclusion.

Claus Stauffenberg used the term *völkisch* in a similarly militant context, but without any of Kommerell's overtones of racial imperialism, in 1938, when he spoke about Germany and the Rhine. He attributed central significance to the fact that Germany's constitution was now *völkisch* rather than monarchic, and he spoke of the need for reconciliation among the European opponents of the First World War — before the last battle was fought on the Rhine against the "un-European" power of Soviet Russia. In the spring of 1939, when war seemed imminent, Stauffenberg wrote of the central responsibility of the officer corps "im grossen völkischen Entscheidungskampf um Sein oder Nichtsein der Nation," and demanded that the soldiers seize the leadership from the hands of the Party.[16]

In July 1932 Walter Anton, brother of Johann Anton and one of the core members of George's later entourage, composed an unpublished *Denkschrift* for the young and outspokenly anti-National Socialist Karl Josef ("Cajo") Partsch, and for what he termed the "ältere Ungläubige" within the Circle.[17] Anton's memorandum consists of more than five oversized single-spaced typed pages of praise for National Socialism and its *Führer*, whose ideas, the author remarked, corresponded with those of the Circle in ways that were complicated but undeniable:

> Freilich bleibt Sinn und Weg unseres Handelns, unseres Stolzes auf Deutschland, unserer Kunst nur für uns gangbar und nicht für die, die wir gerne an uns fesseln möchten und nicht fesseln mögen, weil ihnen alles fremd bleibt, worin wir uns mit gutem Gewissen bewegen. Aber so tief die Trennungskluft bleibt: sie ist nicht mehr bodenlos und die beginnende Verständigung kann nur der verkennen, der wie gesagt, eine politische Erfüllung dichterischer Hoffnung in so reiner Form erwartet, wie die dichterische Hoffnung selbst sich ausgedrückt hat.[18]

Anton's *Denkschrift* appears to have reached some of those for whom it was intended. George read it in Gerda von Puttkamer's house in Wasserburg where he was staying for some weeks in the summer of 1932 (as he did again in 1933). Other young friends no doubt read it there, too. George is not on record as having condemned Walter Anton's memorandum. Gerda von Puttkamer wrote a hostile, equally unpublished *Entgegnung* in which she reports that the Master had said about Anton's text that it was not intended for any kind of public. Its adressees, George reportedly concluded, were those amenable to certain points of view. She considered this comment as half-apologetic.[19]

In his *Denkschrift*, Anton pointed to differences between the members of the Circle and those of the Nazi Party, but suggested that the latter possessed means to bring about social transformations that were also in the interest of the Circle:

> Die Helfer dieses Aufrührers passen schlecht in unsere Reihen: die bärenhaften und kläffenden Kerle, die blindwütig dem Parteidienst leben. Aber sie haben den Schlüssel! Unsere Sache ist es nicht, Volksreden zu halten, ihre Sache ist es nicht in den Kreis der Bl.f.d.K. [i.e., Blätter für die Kunst] zu passen. [. . .] Die anderen mit dem Abzeichen haben sich, mit Recht oder Unrecht, jedenfalls zu einem Leben bekannt, wie wir es ihnen auch vorschreiben würden.[20]

Alluding to concepts that George and his friends had derived from Plato's philosophy and their project of founding a state through the *Blätter für die Kunst*, Anton commented:

> Die Weiterentwicklung dieser Partei hat mit den idealen Staatsgründungen gemeinsam, dass einfach dem Wesen nach zwei Mächte in ihrer Mitarbeit fast bis zur Ausschaltung geschwächt sind: das ewig weibliche und das ewig jüdische, die man gerne zum gleichen Dämon rechnen mag. Ihr Programm ist so sehr von männlichem Geist diktiert, dass im Streben um seine Verwirklichung der jüdische Geist und der weibliche Geist kaum Handhaben finden, um die Männer sich dienstbar zu machen, sondern es ist ein Stück öffentliches Leben geschaffen, das sich fortentwickelt unter fast gelungenem Ausschluss der jüdischen und der weiblichen Kräfterichtung. Beide haben nur insoweit Raum, als sie gegen ihren eigenen Dämon zu kämpfen imstande sind oder allem Geiste fernstehen. Da diese Eigenschaften nur eine einzige geistige Bewegung in der uns bekannten Zeit gehabt hat, werden wir schwer um die Erkenntnis herum kommen, dass unerklärlich und unbewusst, aber wirksam jener Aufrührer von dieser einzigen geistigen Bewegung irgendwo erfasst worden ist. [. . .] Was auch eintreffe: seine bis jetzt zurückgelegte rasende Fahrt ist nach der Gründung durch Bismarck und die Rettung durch den Marschall die dritte Tat, die das Reich bewahrte vor dem Versinken im formlosen Bürgerdreck aller Erdteile. Da gegen diesen Morast auf der uns bekannten Welt kein anderer Geist lebt, als der der deutschen Dichter, so können wir nicht umhin, diesen Redner als Knecht des deutschen Geistes zu begrüssen, wenn er ihm heute auch verworren dient. [. . .] In einem Worte haben verschiedene Wirklichkeiten Platz und in diesem Parteiprogramm manche uns verwandte, im Gegensatz zur Reichsverfassung, in die kein Herrgott einen anständigen Sinn hineintragen kann. So ist die Frage der Zukunft nicht: sind sie am rechten Weg? sondern: wird das Gefühl der stimmenberechtigten Deutschen durchhalten bei einer höheren und grausameren Ausdeutung und wird eine Waffengewalt nachhelfen können?[21]

Edith Landmann, one of the numerous Jewish followers of George, noted in 1933 that many Nazi beliefs, even if they had become distorted in the process of their realization, had long since been shared by members of the Circle.[22] Woldemar Count Uxkull-Gyllenband saw the Master's vision realized in Hitler's Third Reich.[23] Ernst Bertram held the same view; Kurt Hildebrandt, Walter Elze, Ludwig Thormaehlen, Albrecht von Blumenthal, and Frank Mehnert all wanted to participate in what they viewed as the New Beginning promised by National Socialism; Mehnert demanded a leading role for the Secret Germany in this process.[24] Bertram, Hildebrandt, Elze, Thormaehlen, Blumenthal, and Uxkull-Gyllenband joined the NSDAP.[25] Bertram declared his allegiance to the National Socialists in a lecture at the University of Cologne on 3 May 1933, insisting that it was based on George's teaching.[26] George's younger, non-Jewish disciples, and even one of his Jewish disciples, had little doubt, earlier in 1933, that the Master's "Neues Reich" was beginning to take shape, although a regrettably coarse crowd were acting as his servants.[27]

The *Führer* Principle and George's Claim to Political Leadership

Stefan George was fond of referring to his Circle and its subcircles as "der Staat," using the German title of Plato's book that in English is translated as *The Republic*. In a central passage of this book, Glaucon says to Socrates that the state they are discussing exists in their words but nowhere on earth. Socrates replies: "In heaven perhaps it has been erected as a model for him who will see and for the seeing who will follow it. There is no difference whether it exists or will exist anywhere; for only for the sake of this state the seeing will act, and never for the sake of any other."[28] George's view of his friends as the nucleus of the future Germany, a Germany that would be revealed later, corresponded to Plato's concept.[29] But George located his ideal of the future in the underground, in the soil, not in heaven, as Plato had done.

The idea of a future Secret Germany, which was still hidden had some currency in the early nineteenth century. Germany then lacked political unity, and poets and philosophers instead identified Germany's greatness and mission in her intellectual and cultural accomplishments.[30] Hölderlin incorporated the idea of Germany's secret creative genius in his odes "Gesang des Deutschen" and "An die Deutschen," as well as in his *hymnos* "Germania":

> Nicht länger darf Geheimniss mehr
> Das Ungesprochene bleiben,
> [. . .]

Germania, wo du Priesterin bist
Und wehrlos Rath giebst rings
Den Königen und den Völkern.[31]

George thought of his own work as a direct continuation of Hölderlin's poetry.[32] The Germany of the poets and philosophers was, in his view, the true Germany. It owned the true German ethnic and cultural identity. It was *völkisch* in the sense that it embodied this national identity. It was identical with the Circle.

In a 1910 essay that he wrote on George's behalf, Karl Wolfskehl used the expression "geheimes Deutschland" to refer to the contributors to the *Blätter für die Kunst*, their exclusive readership, and the dormant forces out of which the new image of the Nation would rise: "Denn was heute unter dem wüsten oberflächenschorf noch halb im traume sich zu regen beginnt, das *geheime Deutschland*, das einzig lebendige in dieser zeit, das ist hier, nur hier zu wort gekommen." Wolfskehl concluded: "Und das gibt uns die furcht und das hoffen darin wir heute glühen: dass eine bewegung aus der tiefe, wenn in Europa dergleichen noch möglich ist, nur von Deutschland ausgehen kann, dem geheimen Deutschland, für das jedes unserer worte gesprochen ist, aus dem jeder unserer verse sein leben und seinen rhythmus zieht, dem unablässig zu dienen glück, not und heiligung unseres lebens bedeutet."[33]

In the later 1920s, by contrast, George authorized less innocuous statements. He personally edited the works of his friends, and the latter had to seek his approval to have their works published by the Circle's house publisher, Georg Bondi. George negotiated and signed contracts with the publisher, and sometimes the publisher did not know who the author was. After he had completed his *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (1927),[34] Ernst Kantorowicz read the proofs together with the Master and Berthold Stauffenberg, but the signatures in the correspondence with Bondi identified George as the author. Kantorowicz informed George that he had noticed this and that it would be very agreeable if it continued; but if it was a printer's error, it was not too late for a correction.[35]

In October 1928, Max Kommerell, for a time George's favorite disciple and companion, published *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik*. The title, approved by George, announced a claim to leadership that rivalled and parallelled the claim of the National Socialists.[36] Kommerell asserted that "wir darum weder im staatlichen noch im geistigen Sinne uns ein Volk zu nennen ein Recht hätten [. . .] wir sind kein Volk ja noch nicht auf dem Weg eins zu werden." However: "Verheißungen die noch nicht ohne Umschreibung verkündet werden durften, spricht der 'Archipelagus' in Auftritten der Vergangenheit aus. Die Geheimkunde von deutscher Zukunft, die der Archipelagus für uns birgt, ist die Vergöttlichung eines ganzen Volkes im Krieg." Hölderlin, according to Kommerell, had

praised war as the supreme *völkisch* reality. "Denn ist einmal Volk wie Hölderlin es denkt: Volk unter dem die Götter wandeln und ihre Helden zeugen, Volk dessen Leben bis ins unscheinbarste Tun ihnen gleicht, so hat es einen unbedingten Vorrang."[37] Kommerell's glorification of war was authorized by George, although it seemed to contradict his poem "Der Krieg" (1917), in which he had condemned war as wanton sacrifice.[38] Kommerell conjured up the progression from the German classical era to the contemporary sublime era, in which Stefan George was leader, and on to the future war: "das Heute meisterlicher Herrschaft, den zeitlos unerschöpflichen Traum der fortwebt mitten im Ärgsten: dem Unsicherwerden des volkhaften Lebenstriebs, und ein innig ernstes Morgen, wo die Jugend die Geburt des neuen Vaterlandes fühlt in glühender Einung und im Klirren der vordem allzu tief vergrabenen Waffen."[39]

In 1930 Walter Benjamin reviewed Kommerell's book for *Die literarische Welt*. He appreciated the author's accomplishment, but was suspicious of the concept of a Secret Germany, where runes of steel, he wrote, clattered within a thunderous phraseology, and where "die Tarnkappe neben dem Stahlhelm hängt." Benjamin rejected the Secret Germany's claim to Hölderlin as its ancestor and pointed to Kommerell's affinity to questionable *völkisch* concepts. Kommerell described Benjamin's review as "sehr jüdisch," but approved of the reviewer's assessment of his work.[40]

In 1930 Friedrich Wolters published a history of George and his movement, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst. Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890.* George himself had edited and authorized every line in the manuscript, which claimed for George the intellectual leadership of Germany and of the *Reich* heralded by Hölderlin and founded by George. Wolters contended that George had made himself "Schritt um Schritt, Werk um Werk zum Herrn der Gegenwart": "'das heimliche Kaisertum' seines vierzigjährigen Wirkens unter den Deutschen ist jetzt sichtbar geworden."[41]

As early as 1926, Ernst Kantorowicz had criticized Wolters's political activities. It was said, he wrote to Ernst Morwitz, "dass Wolters alle möglichen nationalistischen u. völkischen Aufrufe mitunterzeichnet habe." He considered "ein derartiges politisches Heraustreten vollkommen unmöglich, wenn man sich gleichzeitig mit anderem identifiziert. Die private Anschauung in politicis bleibt ja jedem unbenommen — aber aktiv kann man nicht zwei Staaten dienen u. vor allem werden damit die gewiss über allen Parteien stehenden Dinge *von offizieller Seite* in den Dreck einer Partei gezogen, um mit dieser zu fraternisieren."[42] When the *Blättergeschichte* was published, Kantorowicz repudiated Wolters's attempt to relate the aims of the Secret Germany to the concerns of the day. For Kantorowicz, the ideal of the Secret Germany could only be realized in the distant future. In his eyes, the poem "Geheimes Deutschland" (1928) was meant to forestall the trivialization of George's ideas, to assert the mystery of the

new *Reich*, and thereby to prevent its disintegration and obfuscation. The poem, he argued in a lecture of November 1933, illustrated George's belief that whatever seemed worthy and important today was no better than rotting leaves swept by autumn winds; only that which still rested in protective slumber, "im tiefinnersten schacht weihlicher erde," was "wunder undeutbar für heut./ geschick wird des kommenden tags . ."[43]

Earlier, in June 1933, Kantorowicz had sent George a letter in which he appeared to express his disappointment at the Master's reaction to the most recent political events. Kantorowicz acknowledged the fate that separated him, as a Jew, from George, but added that he was glad that it had not affected their personal relationship. Nevertheless, he wrote, he had not been unprepared for this fate, and it had been clear to him that he would not deny his "Blut" if it was attacked: "Aber ebenso war es mir klar • dass genau so wenig d.M. seine aufgabe und was seines amtes ist durch das los einzelner freunde in frage stellen darf — und wenn • um d.M.s worte zu gebrauchen • sich jetzt jeder gezeigt hat wie er ist: wie hätte ich da erwarten • ja gar wünschen oder hoffen mögen • d.M. hierin als einzigen eine ausnahme machen zu sehen!" A month later he congratulated George upon his birthday, wishing him, above all, "es möge Deutschland so werden • wie es sich der Meister erträumt hat!"[44]

Other members of the Circle harboured expectations that extended well beyond the realm of poetic dreams. Their letters to George and some of their books reverberate with these expectations, and George's approval of them cannot be doubted. Indeed, George himself had long toyed with the idea of political leadership. In November 1916 his friend Kurt Breysig had suggested that after the war, people would have to be thoroughly transformed. George replied: "Ja, das ist unser Geschäft."[45] In a conversation with Berthold Vallentin in January 1920, George said that in a new *Jahrbuch* he would take a political stance and deal with the great political movements of his time; the power of governments had diminished recently, he pointed out, so that the forces of the Circle might be sufficient for effective action.[46] In February 1928, he voiced the concern that the window for such action was closing: "Es könne vielleicht noch einmal das schlimme deutsche Schicksal eintreten, dass nämlich die Gedanken der Bewegung nicht in Deutschland zur tathaften Wirkung gebracht würden, dass aber das Ausland diese Bewegungsgedanken aufgreift und sie zur Tat macht, wie das schon früher geschehen sei." George pointed to French and English Romantic literary figures such as Victor Hugo and Lord Byron, who had helped to bring about a change in popular attitude. In Germany, by contrast, the Romantic Movement had remained a purely literary phenomenon: "Es käme immer nur darauf an, dass eine grosse Täterperson solche Gedanken aufgreife und sie in die politische Wirksamkeit überführe." His own method was subterranean: "Es wäre heute eine Kleinigkeit, aus der geistigen Bewegung eine Gemeinschaft zu bilden,

einen jungdeutschen Orden zu machen oder dergleichen. Aber das habe mit ihm und seiner unterirdischen Wirkung nichts zu tun, sondern würde diese nur auf halbem Wege zunichte machen."[47]

In April 1933 the Hitler government invited Stefan George to join the Prussian Academy of the Arts. He replied on 10 May 1933, through Ernst Morwitz:

> irgendwelchen posten • auch ehrenhalber • der sogenannten akademie kann ich nicht annehmen ebensowenig einen sold . . dass diese akademie jezt unter nationalem zeichen steht ist nur zu begrüssen und kann vielleicht später zu günstigen ergebnissen führen — ich habe seit fast einem halben jahrhundert deutsche dichtung und deutschen geist verwaltet ohne akademie • ja hätte es eine gegeben wahrscheinlich gegen sie.

But he went on to say that he by no means denied the ancestorship of the new national movement and did not exclude his intellectual cooperation:

> die ahnherrschaft der neuen nationalen bewegung leugne ich durchaus nicht ab und schiebe auch meine geistige mitwirkung[48] nicht beiseite. Was ich dafür tun konnte habe ich getan • die jugend die sich heut um mich schart ist mit mir gleicher meinung . . das märchen vom abseitsstehn hat mich das ganze leben begleitet — es gilt nur fürs unbewaffnete auge. Die gesetze des geistigen und des politischen sind gewiss sehr verschieden — wo sie sich treffen und wo geist herabsteigt zum allgemeingut das ist ein äussert verwickelter vorgang • Ich kann den herrn der regierung nicht in den mund legen was sie über mein werk denken und wie sie seine bedeutung für sie einschätzen. Es läge mir daran • lieber Ernst· dass dies wortgetreu der betreffenden stelle mitgeteilt werde • es ist durchaus überlegt •[49]

Some commentators have been at pains to downplay, ignore, suppress, or reinterpret these statements. But if George had wanted to assert his distance and aloofness, he would presumably not have denied it. His own claim to *ahnherrschaft* is unequivocal.

Racial Discrimination

In George's time, there was a widespread tendency to apply pseudo-Darwinist concepts to human society. The proponents of "Social Darwinism" frequently adopted *völkisch* ideas and called for the exclusion or even "dehumanization" of certain groups. There was a profound uneasiness about the so-called masses, notwithstanding a temptation to mobilize them for particular political purposes. In the poem "Die tote Stadt" (1903), included in *Der Siebente Ring* (1907), George vilified the masses and announced their impending death:

> Die menge tages feilscht und abends tollt.
> [. . .]
> Euch all trifft tod. Schon eure zahl ist frevel.[50]

In the introduction to the *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* of 1912, Friedrich Gundolf and Friedrich Wolters lamented "die mit der masse sich stetig steigernde artverschlechterung" and called it "eine fressende wucherung die man sich gewissenlos zugezogen hat und die nur durch gift und feuer geheilt werden kann."[51]

Antisemitism was also part of the mentality of the Circle. In 1905 George wrote to Melchior Lechter that "München ist die einzige stadt der Erde ohne 'den bürger' hier giebt es nur volk und jugend. Niemand sagt dass diese immer angenehm sind • aber tausendmal besser als dieser Berliner mischmasch von unterbeamten juden und huren!"[52] Recording a visit to George on 16 April 1911, Ernst Robert Curtius noted in his diary the following comment George had made about his Jewish disciples:

> Juden sind die besten Leiter. Sie sind geschickt im Verbreiten umd Umsetzen von Werten. Freilich, so elementar wie wir erleben sie nicht. Sie sind überhaupt andere Menschen. Ich erlaube nie, daß sie in meiner Gesellschaft oder im Jahrbuch in der Überzahl sind.[53]

Friedrich Gundolf said in 1920 that he did not feel Jewish, only German, but that he feared, if he accepted a teaching post at Berlin University, the "Pogromradau, der jetzt alle Hörsäle von Juden füllt beim geringsten Anlass."[54] Woldemar Uxkull-Gyllenband wrote to George on 28 November 1923 that some friends — he, Thormaehlen, Morwitz, Blumenthal, and Percy Gothein — were preparing a series of lectures in Magdeburg, with Blumenthal, Gothein and Uxkull as speakers. Ernst Kantorowicz's participation had been considered: "jedoch glaubt man • dass zu einer staatlichen Geste das jüdische Element heute nicht am platze sei • ja dass die wirkung beeinträchtigt oder gestört werden könne."[55] On 3 May 1924 Uxkull wrote to George from Oxford: "Was natürlich vollständig fehlt ist der so scheussliche (bitte mit Meisterlicher betonung) typus des geist-juden, oder der in ihren bann geratenen hyper-blonden arier."[56]

Johann Anton wrote to George on 11 July 1928 that *Die literarische Welt* was collecting comments on the Master for the occasion of his birthday, and that Jews, too, had been asked for their views.[57] Ludwig Thormaehlen wrote to George on 16 July 1931 that Jews were collaborating with the Socialists in order to prevent the government from restoring order and paving the way for economic recovery.[58] Johann Anton's brother Walter, in his 1932 *Denkschrift*, strongly supported Hitler's antisemitic agitation:

> Es bleibt ein Geheimnis so sehr, wie ein Ereignis, wenn ein wütender Oesterreicher die sprache fand, dass unsere braven Lümmel ihr Vertrauen in deutschen Geist setzen und meinen, dass welche da sind, die den deutschen Geist verfechten, auch wo ihr eigenes Hirn nicht darauf gekommen wäre. Er fand die Rede, um sie zu überzeugen, dass sie ihre Kräfte einsetzen müssten in die Schaffung des deutschen Staates gegen die Verkommenheit der gesamten Welt um körperlich und seelisch überhaupt weiter leben zu können. Er überzeugt sie, dass jeder Kampf gegen eine augenblickliche Not Verschwendung und unfruchtbarer Wahnwitz ist, wenn er nicht gleichzeitig dem Erzfeind von uns allen gilt: dem Gesichtslosen und Geschichtslosen. Dass er ihn Weltjuden nennt und wir vielleicht anders, wer ist so sehr Rubrik-Dogmatiker, dass ihn das ernsthaft bewegte![59]

The minds of the many supporters of National Socialism could not have been aroused merely by an attack upon the bourgeois, although the bourgeois, too, had to be fought:

> Nein, da hat der Redner recht, nur der Jude erregt den uralten Volkshass, der hinaufgeläutert heldischer Kampfgeist werden kann. Ist mit diesen unterirdischen Kräften der Jude besiegt, so ist die halbe Bürgerei mitweggeschwemmt. Die andere Hälfte, von der selbstverständlich sehr viel in den Herzen der Kampfpartei selbst steckt, wird sehr geschwächt sein, wenn man sich im Kampf gegen den Juden als Deutschen erkannt hat: Seine Kraft, seine Sendung und das Glück des Sieges![60]

In her 1933 manifesto "An die deutschen Juden, die zum geheimen Deutschland hielten," Edith Landmann was quite explicit that, faced with the Eastern European Jews who had come to Germany before and after the war, she herself had harbored antisemitic feelings, out of love for the German nation.[61] She employed the past tense.

By 1933, a number of George's friends openly supported the Nazi party. Frank Mehnert, George's close companion in his final years, was attracted to the National Socialists and at the same time repulsed by their vulgarity. With George's permission, he sculpted a Hitler bust, which was marketed by Hanfstaengl, the Munich art dealer. Yet Mehnert could not see how the Secret Germany was going to fit into the new Germany of the Nazis. As he wrote to George, the Greek warriors of the Locrian city Opus always kept a place in their phalanx for the spirit of the their dead leader Ajax; but there seemed to be no place in the new system for the members of the Circle.[62]

George's friend Kurt Hildebrandt was certain that George shared his antisemitic views. On 7 January 1935 he wrote to Arvid Brodersen: "Daß die Juden im politischen Staat und im geistigen zersetzend sind, war St. G.'s Lehre schon in der Kriegszeit." He prefaced his next reference to George's view of the Jews with the following words: "Ich halte mich nicht

für berechtigt, zufällige einzelne Äußerungen des M. [des Meisters, i.e., Stefan George] mitzuteilen, aber klare grundsätzliche Entscheidungen, die vielleicht über die Wege seiner Anhänger entscheiden, halte ich mich verpflichtet mitzuteilen." He continued: "Mit der Haltung der Juden war er [i.e., Stefan George] in zunehmendem Maasse unzufrieden. Im Jahre 32 hat er mir gesagt, die Juden sollen sich nicht wundern, wenn ich mich zu den N.S. halte." After an account of his discussion with George about his book on Plato, which had been received "mit äußerster Kälte" by the Jews and their Aryan friends, Hildebrandt wrote: "Ich habe den M. gefragt, ob ich in die Partei eintreten solle — das war töricht, denn eine Bejahung wäre eine Kränkung der jüdischen Freunde gewesen. Aber daß der M. eine Äußerung dazu überhaupt ablehnte, besagt genug. *Mindestens* steht fest, daß der M. alles vermieden wissen wollte, was ihn in Gegensatz zum NS bringen konnte — mit Ausnahme des Festhaltens an den besten jüdischen Anhängern."[63]

In July 1933, Woldemar ("Woldi") Uxkull-Gyllenband delivered a lecture to the students of Tübingen University entitled "Über das revolutionäre Ethos bei Stefan George." Uxkull explained that a heroic worldview and the leadership principle lay at the heart of George's poetic vision and that this vision was now being realized in the new Reich of the National Socialists. Following George, he predicted a major new European upheaval that would soon begin in Germany, after the four historical upheavals she had previously caused: the Barbarian Invasions, the Holy Roman Empire, the Reformation, and Weimar classicism: "Heute wird keinem mehr verborgen sein, daß sich der fünfte Stoß vorbereitet, um wieder herbeizuführen, daß 'des erdteils herz die welt erretten soll'."[64] Uxkull's friends did not think much of these effusions. Berthold Stauffenberg, for instance, called it idle talk and remarked: "zum glück wird [Woldemar Uxkull-Gyllenband] • und was [er] sagt • äusserst gering eingeschätzt."

At Easter 1933, Ernst Kantorowicz showed Stefan George the draft of his letter to the Prussian and Reich minister for science, art, and public education, in which he protested against the persecution of Jews and requested leave from Frankfurt University for the summer semester. George had no objections.[65] At the same time, Kantorowicz wrote to him of his regret that as a Jew he was "von dem allein rassisch fundierten Staat notwendig ausgeschlossen."[66] During the summer semester of 1933 Kantorowicz held his seminars at his private home. He had an invitation to teach at New College in Oxford, but preferred to resume his teaching at Frankfurt University at the beginning of the winter semester of 1933/34. He had decided to give a series of lectures, as he wrote to George in November 1933, on ">die destruktion des mittelalters< • eben über das >interregnum< [. . .] Dieses thema schien mir auch deswegen ganz geeignet • weil aus ihm die notwendige geburt eines >geheimen

Deutschland< nach dem Zusammenbruch des stauferreichs deutlich hervorgehen dürfte. [. . .] Diesen gedanken gemäss — und um den fatalen mist • welchen freunde (voran der Woldi) fabrizierten • doch mit einer erdschicht zu überdecken • damit diese häufchen wenigstens zu stinken aufhören und allmählich zu humus werden — habe ich einen eröffnungsvortrag gehalten • betitelt: >Das Geheime Deutschland<."[67]

In this (re)inaugural lecture, delivered on 14 November 1933, Kantorowicz explained that beauty, nobility, and greatness were the holy trinity of the Secret Germany. Its ancestors were the gods of Hellas, the saints of the *civitas dei*, the medieval emperors, and Dante's *humana civilitas*. But the Secret Germany, Kantorowicz pointed out, had no counterparts in contemporary Germany. An unfathomable abyss separated the distorted face of contemporary Germany from the heroes of the Secret Germany — Holbein, Frederick the Great, Herder, Goethe, Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Stefan George. The best of the nation, Kantorowicz said, now had to devote their lives to the Secret Germany and to making it visible again. He concluded by quoting from George's *Der Stern des Bundes* (1914):

> Hemmt uns! untilgbar ist das wort das blüht.
> Hört uns! nehmt an! trotz eurer gunst: es blüht —
> Übt an uns mord und reicher blüht was blüht!

Shortly afterward, on 11 December, after continued disruptions orchestrated by the National Socialist *Studentenbund*, Kantorowicz suspended his lectures and emigrated to Oxford.

Karl Wolfskehl, by contrast, remarked to Albert Verwey in 1932 that he was less affected by the National Socialists' anti-intellectualism; but his whole being and humanity, he wrote, was suffocated and poisoned by their antisemitism, their "Haß, wahllos, zügellos gegen den 'Juden', gegen diesen chimärischen, doch so blutgetränkten Begriff." Wolfskehl castigated the Jews around Stefan George who refused to acknowledge the centrality of antisemitism to National Socialism and who only regretted "daß ein abscheulicher Zufall sie zurückhält mitzuthun, der 'großen nationalen Bewegung sich voll und ganz anzuschließen'!"[68]

George himself appeared to be insensitive to the dramatic rise in antisemitic violence and agitation since the Nazi takeover on 30 January 1933. When in September 1933 Edith Landmann drew his attention to what was happening to the Jews in Germany, he merely replied that his life and his friends were sufficient proof of his own tolerance and indifference toward all religions.[69] But even though the later guardians of George's works and papers were at pains to obscure some of its traces after 1945,[70] antisemitism was obviously a part of the Circle's intellectual furniture. There is ample evidence that George's own position towards Jews and Judaism was ambiv-

alent, his friendships with some of the most outstanding German-Jewish intellectuals of his time notwithstanding. Edith Landmann reports that George sought to suppress all expressions of antisemitism in his Circle,[71] but he made a number of antisemitic comments to Ernst Robert Curtius in 1911, which were omitted by the authors of the *Zeittafel*, even though their authenticity was not in doubt.[72] While many of George's remarks on this subject only reiterated commonplaces of the time, some of his statements, which will be examined in the following section, help to explain his insensitivity to the plight of the German Jews in 1933.

The Ideology of the Circle and National Socialism

Given that throughout his career he sought to maintain an air of aloofness, superiority, and secrecy, George left behind an astounding number of comments on public affairs. He is reported to have occasionally uttered deprecating remarks about Hitler and the National Socialists. Upon closer inspection, however, these hardly support the contentions put forth by some of his friends that he sought to distance himself categorically from the National Socialist movement.[73] Quite the opposite is true: in March 1933, he told Edith Landmann in view of "das Politisch-Aktuelle": "es sei doch immerhin das erste Mal, dass Auffassungen, die er vertreten habe, ihm von aussen widerklängen."[74] As will be shown below, important members of the Circle had the same impression.

There is not much evidence of George's desire to dissociate himself and his Circle from the Nazis after the first national electoral success of the NSDAP in September 1930. Gerda von Puttkamer, who unequivocally condemned the Nazi party, was alarmed to see that someone as close to George as Walter Anton could express the views he had articulated in his 1932 *Denkschrift*. While she believed that these views were a perversion of George's, she was unable to report that the latter had condemned Anton's violently antisemitic tract.[75] Robert Boehringer and Karl Josef Partsch both claim that George repudiated the Brownshirts, but their testimonies are contradictory.[76] To be sure, George had said that Hitler lacked the greatness of a Caesar or a Napoleon.[77] Before the seizure of power, he had warned that in the event of a Nazi takeover, everyone in Germany would have to wear a noose around his neck, and those refusing to do so would be hanged immediately. When one of his friends pointed to the crudeness of the Nazi methods, he replied that hangmen were notoriously unpleasant. He did not want his young friend Frank Mehnert to join any of the Nazi organizations, and in April 1933 he encouraged Karl Josef Partsch to talk Mehnert out of his plans.

How much weight should one give to these statements? George depended on Mehnert's services as a cook, secretary, and companion; he

understandably did not want him to become absorbed in political activities (in which he no doubt would have played a leading role). But he did not object to Mehnert's work on a Hitler bust. Boehringer and Partsch report that there were intense and frequent political discussions among George's friends and in his presence. According to Partsch, George put an end to such discussions when Boehringer, who held strongly anti-National Socialist views, was present.[78] Boehringer later described George's position as one that neither supporters nor opponents of National Socialism could use for their purposes. No one could know, he argued, whether or not George would have condemned the National Socialists at a later point. This argument in itself, however, suggests that George did not reject the National Socialists, not even in conversation with Boehringer who was a known opponent of their regime. Though Boehringer mentions a few instances where George made unfavorable comments on the Nazis, it is evident that these carried little weight in his eyes.[79]

1933

At the beginning of July 1933, Stefan George visited his hometown Bingen in order to renew his passport. Four days before his sixty-fifth birthday on 12 July, he left Bingen again, supposedly because he wanted to avoid any official honous by the Nazi government. He went to Berlin-Dahlem, however, where he stayed with Walter Kempner, whose address was known to his close friends, including Morwitz, who had acted as intermediary in the earlier exchange with the government in May. George did not try to prevent his disciples from admitting any government emissaries. In fact, his close friend Ludwig Thormaehlen was under the impression that the Master expected the arrival of such an emissary. But none came. There was merely a personal telegram from the Minister for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, Joseph Goebbels.[80]

In due course, George left for Wasserburg on Lake Constance, where he spent the next four weeks, accompanied (at various times) by his friends Frank Mehnert, Berthold Stauffenberg, Claus Stauffenberg, and some younger friends. On 24 August 1933 he took the ferry across the lake to Heiden in Switzerland. Robert Boehringer later claimed that George's subsequent remark to the effect that halfway across the lake he had been able to breathe more easily was meant as a political comment. But George suffered from respiratory difficulties in the oppressively humid climate of the Wasserburg lakefront and moved to the more elevated Heiden in order to escape it.[81] Karl Josef Partsch's account of George's crossing of Lake Constance is equally ambivalent:

> Ende August 1933 war es Stefan George in Wasserburg zu schwül geworden. Er litt unter der drückenden feuchten Hitze (nicht nur unter vorherbstlichem Wetter wie es auf Seite 287 [i.e., in Ludwig Thormaehlen's memoirs, PH] heisst[82]) und daher entschloss er sich, auf die Schweizer Seite nach Heiden in Appenzell zu gehen, um in dem höher gelegenen Klima besser atmen zu können. Das Haus in Minusio war wohl noch nicht bereit und auch dort wäre es ihm wohl im August noch zu warm gewesen. Es war aber nicht nur das Wetter, das den Dichter bewog, Wasserburg zu verlassen, sondern die Nachrichten über die politischen Ereignisse bedrückten ihn so, daß er nicht mehr auf deutschem Boden bleiben wollte.[83]

The attempts by Partsch and Boehringer to endow George's departure from Germany with a political meaning must be seen against the backdrop of the various attempts, after 1945, to associate George with the Third Reich. Partsch's account in particular was a response to the memoirs of Ludwig Thormaehlen that had been published recently. The fact that Partsch does not cite any specific statement by George on the motivation for his departure suggests that he was not aware of such a statement. In fact, Michael Stettler reports that as early as June 1933 George had been planning to travel to Switzerland.[84] If that was indeed the case and George merely delayed the journey until 24 August, when the weather had become too hot and humid in Wasserburg for him, then Partsch's second explanation — viz. that the political situation in Nazi Germany prompted George to leave for Switzerland — seems no longer plausible. Frank Mehnert, for one, dismissed any suggestion that George's journey across Lake Constance constituted a form of emigration. George, indeed, never spoke of emigration or exile until his death on 4 December 1933. He had spent the last months of 1931 and 1932, and the first months of 1932 and 1933, in Minusio in the Ticino. He simply began the same routine in the autumn of 1933, arriving in Minusio on 23 September.[85]

On 27 September 1933, Berthold Stauffenberg found George not well, generally weak and suffering from diminished appetite. Two months later Mehnert informed some friends that George's condition gave cause for concern. Robert Boehringer, Mehnert, the physician Walter Kempner, and Clotilde Schlayer took turns at his bedside in the hospital of Minusio. They were soon joined by Karl Josef Partsch, Berthold and Alexander Stauffenberg, Albrecht von Blumenthal, Claus Stauffenberg, Walter Anton, and Ludwig Thormaehlen, who were allowed brief glimpses of George in his darkened room, without him noticing them. Boehringer, Mehnert, Berthold Stauffenberg, and Walter Kempner thought it best to delay the arrival of Ernst Kantorowicz and Wilhelm Stein, both of whom were Jewish. Ernst Morwitz, also Jewish, was not even informed of George's condition until after his death.[86]

Following George's death on 4 December 1933, Robert Boehringer, who had been appointed as his executor, directed the funeral preparations. Thormaehlen, Blumenthal, Berthold Stauffenberg, Walter Anton, and others wanted to take the poet's remains to Germany, but Boehringer pointed to George's dictum that a man was to be buried where he had died. All eventually agreed to bury their Master in Minusio. Claus Stauffenberg organized the wake that was customary in the Ticino. The friends took turns in the graveyard chapel from the evening of 4 December to the morning of 6 December.[87] Twenty-five friends, including Morwitz, Kantorowicz, and Wolfskehl, who had eventually been notified, attended the funeral.

The large laurel wreath sent by the government of Nazi Germany was adorned with a black, white, and red ribbon, as well as a red ribbon with a black swastika in a circular white field. Clotilde Schlayer covered the swastika with roses that were subsequently removed by Frank Mehnert. A little later someone removed the white patch with the swastika. Frank Mehnert and Karl Josef Partsch bought white linen and black ribbon and tried to get George's cook to craft a replacement, but the cook refused. In the end, they did their own cutting and sowing and fastened the final product onto the red ribbon of the wreath.[88] Some of the younger disciples gave the Hitler salute at the Locarno railway station as a train carrying older members of the Circle departed.

Conclusion

Some of George's youngest friends became mortal enemies of the Nazis by 1938. Two of the Stauffenberg brothers gave their lives in their attempt to overthrow Hitler. They never abandoned their loyalty to their Master and to his belief that Germany was destined to save the world, or at least Europe. Claus Stauffenberg was still imbued with this belief at the time of his ill-fated coup d'état. Ascribing Stauffenberg's deed to George's teaching and influence, however, is mere speculation. Stauffenberg acted upon his own ideas.[89] His motivations were ethical in the first instance. They were rooted in such values as family honor and family tradition, the honor and ethos of the military class and the officer's sense of responsibility for the whole nation, and, last but not least, in his devotion to the Catholic faith. Stauffenberg expressed himself to this effect, both before the outbreak of the Second World War and with increasing intensity during the war.[90] When he learned of the systematic killing of Jews in the spring of 1942, his immediate response was that Hitler had to be killed. There are two pieces of evidence, dating from August 1942, which suggest that the knowledge of these killings inspired his actions of July 1944. He told one of his coworkers in the General Staff, then near Vinnitsa in the Ukraine,

that the mass killings of Jews could not be allowed to continue. To another he remarked with regard to the brutal methods employed in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union:

> Die täglichen Berichte von Stäben über die Behandlung der Bevölkerung durch die deutsche Zivilverwaltung, der Mangel an politischer Zielgebung für die besetzten Länder, die Judenbehandlung beweisen, daß die Behauptungen Hitlers den Krieg für eine Umordnung Europas zu führen, falsch sind. Damit ist dieser Krieg ungeheuerlich [. . .][91]

Once he was sure that he could trust him, Stauffenberg confided to his interlocutor, in May 1943, that Hitler must be removed.[92] A year earlier, he had already made a similar remark to two other comrades.[93]

Stauffenberg's motivations had nothing in common with George's will to domination, and a basis for them cannot be found either in George's works or in his more general outlook. George never approved of "Verschwörung, Umsturz, Staatsstreich," all of which his most recent biographer, Thomas Karlauf, regards as central concepts of his world-view.[94] Karlauf claims that George had educated the Stauffenberg brothers in this conspiratorial ethos. There is no evidence to support this assertion. The word "Verrat" (treason or betrayal) appears only three times in George's oeuvre and each time with strongly negative connotations.[95] Although George's poetic imagination tended, as Robert Norton observes, "from the beginning, to gravitate toward images of violent excess, even murderous mayhem,"[96] it seems unlikely that he would have approved of mass murder, or even the persecution of the Jews. Yet such persecutions began in his lifetime, and he gave no indication that he disapproved of or opposed them.

Edith Landmann scorned the suggestion that George might remain loyal to two or three of his Jewish friends as exceptions:

> Unbekümmert um alles, was in Deutschland gegen uns gepredigt wird, sollten wir — Ausnahmen — dennoch fortfahren, in Deutschland zu leben und zu wirken, herausgehoben über alles Gewoge und Gekeife des Tages durch das Siegel, das uns vom Geheimen Deutschland aufgedrückt war? Nun wohl, wenn noch einer da ist, oder vielleicht noch einer — und sollte es etwa noch ein drittr sein? — den der Dichter persönlich nicht missen, den er nicht von sich lassen mag, den nimmt er mit sich; der wohnt dann auf einem anderen Stern, und mag stolz sagen: wo ich bin, ist Deutschland. Aber alle anderen, alle, die dieses Geistes Hauch verspürt, ihn in sich und weitergetragen und heimlich zur Richte ihrer Tritte gemacht haben? Was Ausnahmen? Soll Leben und Tod für uns abhängen von eurer Gnadenwahl? Sollen die Deutschen die jüdischen Blutes sind, am Himmelstor des deutschen Reichs um Einlass bettelnd dastehen vor einem Petrus, der nach Willkür dekretierte: wer Jude ist, bestimme

> ich? Oder sollte vielleicht der Dichter in Person an den Herrn Kultusminister Rust oder an Herrn Justizkommissar Frank ein Billetchen schreiben, um seine um sein Werk wohlverdienten Freunde freundlich zu empfehlen? Gebt euch nicht mit Ausnahmen, der alten schlechten Ausrede zufrieden.[97]

Karl Wolfskehl had expressed similar views, even before the National Socialists had come to power.[98]

Initially at least, Claus Stauffenberg sought to maintain an air of tolerant skepticism towards the new brand of *völkisch* nationalism preached by the Nazis. But his comments, expressed in his correpondence with Frank Mehnert of March 1932, are a tortuous imitation of George's wavering.[99] Ernst Morwitz, meanwhile, thought it was exceedingly difficult for the younger disciples to read George's poems without concluding that the "national awakening" promised by Hitler and his followers was in accordance with his poetic prophecies; they could not see, Morwitz remarked, that these prophecies had nothing in common with National Socialism.[100] Most other Jewish members of the Circle concurred.

A poet, if he is to transcend the humdrum of everday affairs and petty this-worldly concerns, must speak in radical, fundamental terms. The beauty of his art depends on complex and profound insights, and on general rather than specific validity. Hölderlin did not mention Napoleon by name in his hymnic poem "Friedensfeier" of 1801/02.[101] Stefan George seemed to eschew the realm of politics for similar reasons. His intentions, however, were political, insofar as they were directed towards the large-scale reorganization of human society. He showed his disdain for the vulgar herd, whose very existence he denounced as sacrilegious: "Schon eure zahl ist frevel."[102] His views on the realization of his political ideals were complicated: if political action was impossible without mobilizing masses, the latter had to be mobilized indirectly, through his own "subterranean" forces. Plagued by ill health late in his life, it seems unlikely that he would have been willing or able to take on a role of public leadership; but he believed that the *ahnherrschaft* of National Socialism belonged to him.

Notes

[1] This article is based on documents which have only recently become available, as well as on previously available material. It is a thoroughgoing revision and expansion of Peter Hoffmann, "Stefan George and National Socialism: Affinity and Ambiguity," in *Da una riva e dall' altra: studi in onore di Antonio D'Andrea*, ed. Dante Della Terza (Florence: Cadmo, 1995), 363–80. The author is indebted to Martin Ruehl, Robert E. Norton, and Ute Oelmann for valuable pieces of information.

[2] Ernst Robert Curtius, "Stefan George im Gespräch," *Kritische Essays zur europäischen Literatur* (Bern: A. Francke, 1950), 153, 157. Curtius evidently drew on his diary for the quotations he used in this 1950 essay on George. The diary is in the possession of Curtius's widow: Ilse Curtius, letter to the author 6 December 1985. From p. 154 onward, the pages of the diary were torn out, that is, from August 1910 through 1911; Curtius notes at the end of his diary "St. G. S. 171–79": these pages are among those that were torn out. Hans-Jürgen Seekamp, Ray Ockenden, and Marita Keilson Lauritz suppressed the passage in their *Zeittaffel*, because of its contents. According to Keilson-Lauritz, the authenticity of the passage was not in doubt: Marita Keilson-Lauritz in discussion with the author, 28 October 1984. "Algabal" was first privately printed in Brussels and "published" in Paris 1892; it later appeared in Stefan George, *Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten, Algabal* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1899).

[3] William Shakespeare, *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth*, ed. P. H. Davison (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 3.1.50–52.

[4] See Robert E. Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and His Circle* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002), 731.

[5] Norton, the first author from outside the Circle to publish a full-length scholarly biography of George, perhaps put too much emphasis on the hard and cruel aspects of George's personality and poetry; he is unequivocal about George's role as a precursor of National Socialism: "If this book has any larger purpose, then it will be that it succeeds in making comprehensible how sensitive, intelligent, and deeply cultivated people, how humane lovers of poetry and beauty, and not just brutish, bloodthirsty thugs, could have embraced an ideology that held death at its core." Norton, *Secret Germany*, xvii; see also 546–48. In his concluding chapter, Norton quotes Walter Benjamin's remark of June 1933 that "if ever God has punished a prophet by fulfilling his prophecy, then that is the case with George" (742). In his comprehensive and erudite work, *Stefan George. Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Karl Blessing Verlag, 2007), Thomas Karlauf does not expressly acknowledge Norton's book; he only refers to it, derisively and in passing, in a footnote; nor does he survey the vast primary and secondary literature on George. Karlauf nonetheless reaches a conclusion only slightly less radical than Norton's: German intellectuals, as represented by George, held on to the hubristic belief that "der *Geist* die eigentliche Macht repräsentiere und alle politischen, gesellschaftlichen und ideologischen Entwicklungen ihn nichts angingen. [. . .] Weil er nicht einmal im Jahr 1933 von dieser Hybris ließ, wurde der deutsche Geist, wie ihn Stephan Anton George aus Büdesheim bei Bingen aufgefasst und mit imperialer Geste vertreten hatte, mitschuldig und verschwand für immer im Abgrund der Geschichte." Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 639.

[6] Immanuel Hermann Fichte, *Johann Gottlieb Fichtes Leben und literarischer Briefwechsel*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1862), 133.

[7] Friedrich Schlegel, *Vom Wiener Kongress zum Frankfurter Bundestag, 10. September 1814–31. Oktober 1818*, in *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, vol. 29 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh; Zurich: Thomas, 1980), 67–68.

[8] Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 645.
[9] Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular,* 645–47; Uwe Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich. Sprache — Rasse — Religion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), 27–54.
[10] *ZT*, 315.
[11] *GA*, 9:39.
[12] Bernhard Zeller, Werner Volke, and Gerhard Hay, eds., *Stefan George, 1868–1968: Der Dichter und sein Kreis; eine Ausstellung des Deutschen Literaturarchivs im Schiller-Nationalmuseum Marbach a.N.* (Munich: Kösel, 1968), 399; Georg Peter Landmann, *Stefan George und sein Kreis: Eine Bibliographie* (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell, 1976), 368; *ZT*, 356; Peter Pawlowsky, *Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1895–1970* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1970), 18.
[13] Berthold Vallentin, *Gespräche mit Stefan George, 1902–1931* (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1961), 47–48, 54; Kurt Breysig, "Stefan George: Gespräche, Dokumente," *Castrum Peregrini* 42 (1960): 26–27; Edgar Salin, *Um Stefan George. Erinnerung und Zeugnis*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1954), 143–44, 158; Morwitz to Stefan George, 10 July 1924, StGA; see also further remarks below.
[14] Max Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik: Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, Hölderlin* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1928), 474.
[15] Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer*, 461, 474–77; Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst: Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1930), 418–32.
[16] Peter Hoffmann, *Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg und seine Brüder* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1992), 177–81, 457–60; Peter Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg: A Family History, 1905–1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 107–10, 288–90.
[17] Löwe [Walter Anton], "Denkschrift zum 31. Juli 32: Für Crajo und ältere Ungläubige vom Löwen geschrieben in ermanglung von Wolters und Hans," typed, StGA George IV, 465. "Crajo" is an obvious typographical error and should be "Cajo." "For lack of Wolters and Hans": Friedrich Wolters had died on 14 April 1930: *ZT,* 368; Hans Anton had taken his own life on 27 February 1931: Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Brüder*, 77. On Karl Josef "Cajo" Partsch's anti-National Socialist views, see Michael Stettler, ed., *Erinnerung an Frank: Ein Lebenszeugnis* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1968), 19; and Ute Oelmann, "Karl Josef Partsch: Politik und Kunstgeschichte im George-Kreis," *George-Jahrbuch* 3 (2000/2001): 176–91; here, 181–82.
[18] Löwe [Walter Anton], "Denkschrift," 2.
[19] [Gerda von Puttkamer], "Entgegnung auf das Löwen-script Sommer 1932," typed, n.d., StGA George 4, 465b; see Oelmann, "Partsch," 180–81.
[20] Löwe [Walter Anton], "Denkschrift," 3.
[21] Löwe [Walter Anton], "Denkschrift," 4–5.

[22] [Edith Landmann], "An die deutschen Juden, die zum geheimen Deutschland hielten," typescript, [Basel], n.d. [1933], Collection Stefan George, LBI, 3: "weil so viele Gedanken des Dritten Reiches, in welcher Verzerrung immer sie verwirklicht werden, die Gedanken längst unseres Herzens waren."

[23] See Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg: A Family History*, 63.

[24] See Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg: A Family History*, 63; and Norton, *Secret Germany*, 730–31.

[25] Elze: Membership on 1 May 1933, Berlin Document Centre (henceforth BDC); Hildebrandt: BDC; Thormaehlen: BDC (Partsch to Greischel 1963, StGA, claims that Thormaehlen was only a candidate for membership); Fahrner: BDC. Blumenthal succeeded in joining the NSDAP only in 1939, two years after admissions, which had closed in 1933, were reopened, and after he had lodged a formal protest against his nonadmission: BDC; Hans Volz, *Daten der Geschichte der NSDAP* (Berlin: A. G. Ploetz, 1943), 54, 73; Zeller, Volke, and Hay, *Stefan George*, 335; Kurt Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1965), 227–30; Kurt Hildebrandt, *Individualität und Gemeinschaft: Festrede auf dem Herbstfeste des sudetendeutschen Kameradschaftsbundes in Schloss Heinrichsruh bei Teplitz* (Berlin: Verlag Die Runde, 1933), 18–19, 26–30; *ZT,* 385. Rudolf Fahrner, a distinguished Germanist and associate of the Circle, acknowledged that George's doctrines converged with those of National Socialism. He was drawn, he wrote, to the Brownshirts, convinced that they were fulfilling George's will: Rudolf Fahrner to Stefan George, 10 July 1933, StGA; Rudolf Fahrner, "Frank," manuscript, n.p., n.d., StGA [13].

[26] Norton, *Secret Germany,* 730.

[27] Löwe [Walter Anton], "Denkschrift" 3; Rudolf Fahrner to Stefan George, 10 July 1933, StGA.

[28] Platon, *Der Staat*, bks. vi–x, transl. by Wilhelm Wiegand, in Platon, *Sämtliche Werke,* vol. 2 (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, n.d.), 366; see also Edgar Salin's translations from Book IX of Plato's *Republic* in *Von Mensch und Staat/ Plato.* (Auswahl und Übertragung von Edgar Salin) (Basel: Schwabe, 1942), 110–22, 263–64, lacking the quoted final passage of Book IX.

[29] [Ernst Kantorowicz], "Das geheime Deutschland: Vorlesung gehalten bei Wiederaufnahme der Lehrtätigkeit am 14. November 1933," [Frankfurt am Main, 1933], Edgar Salin Papers, C 34, Universitätsbibliothek Basel; [Ernst Kantorowicz, "Das geheime Deutschland"], n.p., n.d., AR 7216, Ernst H. Kantorowicz Collection, LBI; Salin, *Von Mensch und Staat*, 263–64; Robert Boehringer, *Mein Bild von Stefan George* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1968), 165; *ZT,* 359; *GA*, 9:59–65; Ernst Morwitz to Stefan George, 11 July 1918, StGA.

[30] As Johann Gottlieb Fichte believed that his *Wissenschaftslehre* would teach the world how to think and how to live.

[31] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Friedrich Seebass and Norbert von Hellingrath, vol. 4, *Gedichte, 1800–1806*, ed. Norbert von Hellingrath (Munich: Georg Müller, 1916), 129–33, 181–85; see also

Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke: Stuttgarter Ausgabe*, ed. Friedrich Beißner, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1951), 3–5, 9–11, 149–52, 388. Michael Hamburger's translation of the quoted verses is problematic: see Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980), 405, 407. See also Friedrich Schiller, *Schillers Werke*, ed. Norbert Oellers, vol. 2, pt. 1, *Gedichte* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 1983), 431–36; Eckhart Grünewald, *Ernst Kantorowicz und Stefan George: Beiträge zur Biographie des Historikers bis zum Jahre 1938 und zu seinem Jugendwerk* "*Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*," Frankfurter Historische Abhandlungen 25 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982), 79–80, cites Friedrich Hebbel, *Sämtliche Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Richard Maria Werner, vol. 6 (Berlin: B. Behr, 1902), 378; Heinrich Heine, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, ed. Manfred Windfuhr, vol. 8, pt. 1, "Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland" (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1979), 496–97; [Paul de Lagarde], *Deutsche Schriften* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1878), 68, 101–2, 248–49; Paul de Lagarde, *Deutsche Schriften*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1892), 98, 125, 241–42; Paul de Lagarde, "Das verborgene Deutschland," privately printed by the Schriftgießerei (Offenbach am Main: Klingspor, 1920), 1–2; [Julius Langbehn], *Rembrandt als Erzieher: Von einem Deutschen* (Leipzig: C. L. Hirschfeld, 1890), 262–67, 309; Erich F. Podach, *Gestalten um Nietzsche: Mit unveröffentlichten Dokumenten zur Geschichte seines Lebens und seines Werks* (Weimar: Erich Lichtenstein, 1932), 198.

[32] Karl Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst und die neueste Literatur," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* (1910): 14–15, 18; *Karl und Hanna Wolfskehl: Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Gundolf, 1899–1931*, ed. Karlhans Kluncker, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1977), 95; *Stefan George-Friedrich Gundolf Briefwechsel*, ed. Robert Boehringer with Georg Peter Landmann (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1962), 254; Kantorowicz, "Deutschland," 2; Norbert von Hellingrath, *Hölderlin: Zwei Vorträge* (Munich: Hugo Bruckmann, 1921), 16–17, 40–41; Wolters, *Stefan George*, 418–19, 426.

[33] Wolfskehl, "Die Blätter für die Kunst," 18.

[34] Ernst Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1927).

[35] E[dgar] S[alin], *Ernst Kantorowicz, 1895–1963* ([Basel:] privately printed, 1963); Ernst Kantorowicz to Stefan George, ca. 27 December 1926, StGA; Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George,* 59–74; Franz K. von Stockert, letter to the author, 5 May 1982; proofreading notes that reveal Berthold Stauffenberg's collaboration, January 1927, in Johann Anton's Papers, StGA.

[36] See Walter Benjamin, "Wider ein Meisterwerk," review of *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik* by Max Kommerell, *Die literarische Welt* 6, nos. 33–34 (1930): 9–11, reprinted in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972), 252–59. For Kommerell's political orientation, see Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 1:182; Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 253; Kommerell to Johann Anton, 24 June, 9 September, 25 September 1930, StGA; Max Kommerell to Frank Mehnert, October 1930, in Max Kommerell, *Briefe und*

Aufzeichnungen 1919–1944, ed. Inge Jens (Olten: Walter, 1967), 188–90; Stefan George to Max Kommerell, 4 January [1928], StGA; Hellmut Strebel to Robert Boehringer, 29 July 1954, StGA; Max Kommerell to Stefan George, 25 June 1931, StGA; Kommerell, *Briefe*, 202–4, 219–23; Ludwig Thormaehlen, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George* (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell, 1962), 245, 263–64; Pawlowsky, *Helmut Küpper*, 26–37; Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 149–57.

[37] Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer*, 461, 474–77; Wolters, *George*, 418–32.

[38] *GA*, 9:27–34.

[39] Kommerell, *Der Dichter als Führer*, 483; Max Kommerell to Johann Anton, 7 December [1930], StGA, printed in Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 1:186–88.

[40] Benjamin, "Wider ein Meisterwerk"; see Benjamin, *Schriften*, 3:252–59; Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Brüder*, 489n42.

[41] Wolters, *George*, 426, 527; Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 1:136–37; *ZT,* 347, 355, 364; Günter Schulz, "Stefan George und Max Kommerell," *Das Literarische Deutschland* 2, no. 3 (February 1951): 3; Kommerell, *Briefe*, 276; Hildebrandt to Brodersen, 7 January 1935, Castrum Peregrini Archive.

[42] Ernst Kantorowicz to Ernst Morwitz, n.d. [probably summer 1926], StGA. Georg Peter Landmann dates the letter "summer 1925"; there can be no doubt that Ernst Kantorowicz referred to the NSDAP, which was refounded only in February 1925; Volz, *Daten der Geschichte*, 19; Kantorowicz states in the letter that he hoped to have completed *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* by late autumn and then to return to Berlin, but on 7 September 1925 he informed Stefan George that he had completed the first two chapters and that he was going to send them to George; George wrote to Bondi, the publisher, on 12 July 1926 that the manuscript was completed; there were readings from it at Alexander Zschokke's house in Berlin in December 1926, by which time the manuscript had gone to the typesetter; Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George,* 74.

[43] The quotation follows the spelling in Kantorowicz, "Deutschland," 3; Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 263–64; Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 1:165; *ZT,* 359; *GA*, 9:59–65; Ernst Morwitz to Stefan George, 11 July 1918, StGA.

[44] Ernst Kantorowicz to Stefan George, [5 June], 10 July 1933, StGA; Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 121–22, with the erroneous date 4 June.

[45] Breysig, "Stefan George," 27.

[46] Vallentin, *Gespräche*, 47–48, 54; Breysig, "Stefan George," 26–27; Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 143–44, 158; Morwitz to Stefan George, 10 July 1924, StGA.

[47] Vallentin, *Gespräche*, 101–3 (19 February 1928).

[48] The words "und schiebe . . ." are not in George's own draft; in Frank Mehnert's first draft it is "mithilfe"; in his second draft "hilfe" in the word "mithilfe" is crossed out and "wirkung" is written above it.

[49] Ernst Morwitz to Stefan George, 10, 12, 25 May 1933, StGA; Stefan George to Ernst Morwitz 10, 15 May 1933, StGA; Ernst Morwitz to Zierold, 10 September 1933, StGA; Ernst Morwitz to Karl Wolfskehl, 25 December 1933, StGA; *Völkischer Beobachter*, 5 December 1933, southern edition, culture supplement. There survive one draft in George's own hand, two in Mehnert's hand, and

copies by Morwitz from September and December 1933. Morwitz's copy of May 1933 appears not to have survived. The excerpt in the *Völkischer Beobachter* possibly relied on Morwitz's copy of May or September 1933. The essential texts are consistent, apart from small spelling variations; the third draft, in Mehnert's hand, has an insertion after "mitgeteilt werde": "[. . .] mitgeteilt werde • es ist durchaus überlegt." In other words: what George wanted transmitted was transmitted. Regarding the offer of a financial reward by the new government, George remarked to Walter Kempner that if one accepted as much as five pennies from the Nazis, one would be lost: Walter Kempner to the author, 6 January 1984.

[50] *GA*, 6/7:30–31; *SW*, 6/7:30 and 30n.

[51] Friedrich Gundolf and Friedrich Wolters, "Einleitung der Herausgeber," *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* 3 (1912 [printed 1911]): iii–viii; here, v; Wolters, *George*, 436–37, repeats the verdict and points out that the *Jahrbücher* made explicit what contemporaries might have mistaken for nothing more than art in George's poems.

[52] Stefan George to Melchior Lechter, [27] April 1905, StGA. This was abridged by Boehringer and Landmann in *George-Gundolf*, 163, to "dieser Berliner mischmasch," but printed out of context in Zeller, Volke, and Hay, *Stefan George, 1868–1968*, 164.

[53] Curtius, "Stefan George im Gespräch," 153.

[54] Edith Landmann, *Gespräche mit Stefan George* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1963), 96; *George-Gundolf*, 339; *ZT*, 307.

[55] Woldemar von Uxkull-Gyllenband to Stefan George, 28 November 1923, StGA.

[56] Woldemar von Uxkull-Gyllenband to Stefan George, 3 May 1924, StGA.

[57] Johann Anton to Stefan George, 11 July [1928], StGA.

[58] Ludwig Thormaehlen to Stefan George, 16 July 1931, StGA.

[59] Löwe [Walter Anton], "Denkschrift," 2.

[60] Löwe [Walter Anton], "Denkschrift," 3.

[61] Edith Landmann, "An die deutschen Juden," 2.

[62] Frank Mehnert's Hitler bust was completed by April 1933 and Hanfstaengl sold at least 30 copies: Mehnert's correspondence 1933–37, Frank Mehnert's papers in the author's possession; Frank Mehnert to Stefan George, 25 September, 1 October 1933, StGA; Frank Mehnert to his mother, 14 and 15 June 1936, 23 October 1937, StGA; Kurt Pilz, "Das Bildnis des Führers," *N.S.B.Z. (Nationalsozialistische Beamten-Zeitung)* 5, no. 9 (1936): 351–54; Hermann Joachim Pagels, "Victor Frank: Führerbüste 1933 in der Industrie- und Handelskammer Magdeburg," *N.S.B.Z. (Nationalsozialistische Beamten-Zeitung)* 5, no. 9 (1936): 348; Rudolf Fahrner, interview with the author, 9 May 1977; George had told Mehnert early in 1933 that he should depict Hitler on horseback; Walter Kempner to the author, 6/7 January 1984. Stettler, *Erinnerung*, 38 is misleading.

[63] Kurt Hildebrandt to Arvid Brodersen, 7 January 1935, Castrum Peregrini Archive; Arvid Brodersen to the author, 19 July 1988; Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 227–30; Hildebrandt, *Individualität*, 18–19, 26–30.

[64] Woldemar Graf Uxkull-Gyllenband, *Das revolutionäre Ethos bei Stefan George* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1933), 8, quoting *GA*, 9:39: "dass einst/Des erdteils herz die welt erretten soll. . . ."

[65] Hans Walzer to Joachim Kramarz, 22 December 1965, Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, Berlin; Berthold Graf Stauffenberg to Maria Classen [14, 20, 23 April 1933], papers of Maria Classen, in the author's possession; Ernst Kantorowicz to Stefan George [5 June] 1933, StGA; *ZT*, 385 (Georg Peter Landmann mistakenly has Kantorowicz and George meet in Berlin on Easter 1933); Ernst Kantorowicz, "Abschrift: Gesuch um Beurlaubung des o. ö. Prof. Dr. Ernst Kantorowicz für das Sommer-Semester 1933, Frankfurt am Main, den 20. April 1933; an den Herrn Minister für Wis., Kunst u. Volksb. Berlin (d. d. Herrn Dekan der Phil. Fak. d. Univ. Frankfurt a.M.)," Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, Universitätsarchiv; Salin, *Kantorowicz*, 6. As a veteran of the First World War, Kantorowicz was exempt from the "Law for the Restitution of the Professional Civil Service" of 7 April 1933. In his letter of 20 April 1933, he declared his "grundsätzlich positive Einstellung gegenüber einem national regierten Reich." See *Reichsgesetzblatt*, pt. 1 (Berlin: Reichsverlagsamt, 1933), 175–77.

[66] Ernst Kantorowicz to Stefan George, [5 June], 10 July 1933, StGA; Grünewald, *Kantorowicz und George*, 121–22, with the erroneous date 4 June.

[67] Uxkull-Gyllenband, *Ethos*, 22–23; Berthold Graf Stauffenberg to Frank Mehnert, 10 January 1935, StGA; Ernst Kantorowicz to Stefan George, 26 November 1933, StGA; Salin, "Kantorowicz," 6–7; Kantorowicz, "Das Geheime Deutschland." Kantorowicz wanted his lecture published by Georg Bondi, but George died on 4 December 1933, and Salin advised Kantorowicz against publication; Kantorowicz to George, 26 November 1933, StGA; Salin to Kantorowicz, 21 December 1933, Salin papers. The poems in *Der Stern des Bundes* have no titles.

[68] Karl Wolfskehl to Albert Verwey, 15 September, 26 October 1932, in *Wolfskehl und Verwey. Die Dokumente ihrer Freundschaft 1897–1946*, ed. Mea Nijland-Verwey (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1968), 266–67, 270–73.

[69] Edith Landmann, *Gespräche,* 209; Salin, *Um Stefan George*, 244; Frank Mehnert, notes 1933–38, StGA.

[70] See, e.g., the attempts by Robert Boehringer and Georg Peter Landmann to omit antisemitic statements by George in their edition of the correspondence between George and Friedrich Gundolf: *George-Gundolf*, 163. See Zeller, Volke and Hay *Stefan George, 1868–1968*, 164.

[71] Edith Landmann, "An die deutschen Juden," 9.

[72] Marita Keilson, letter to the author, 28 October 1985.

[73] See, for example, the recollections of Karl Josef Partsch in Stettler, *Erinnerung*, 19.

[74] Edith Landmann, *Gespräche*, 209.

[75] Puttkamer, "Entgegnung."

[76] Ludwig Thormaehlen to Frank Mehnert, 30 September 1937, StGA; Walter Kempner to the author, 6 January 1984; Clotilde Schlayer to the author, 7 January

1984; Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 2:182–83; Oelmann, "Partsch," 181; Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg: A Family History*, 105.

[77] Walter Kempner to the author, 6 January 1984.

[78] Karl Josef Partsch, ["Erinnerungen an Robert Boehringer,"] in *Wie jeder ihn erlebte*, ed. Georg Peter Landmann (Basel: privately printed, [1977]), 75; *ZT*, 381; Robert Boehringer to the author, 10 June 1968; Puttkamer, "Entgegnung"; Oelmann, "Partsch," 181.

[79] Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 2:182–83.

[80] There were those in the National Socialist Party to whom Stefan George's apparent affinity to their ideas was suspect, if for no other reason than the poet's close friendships with many Jews; some even denounced George as being Jewish himself. *ZT*, 386; Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 2:188; Thormaehlen, *Erinnerungen*, 281–83; Ludwig Thormaehlen to Frank Mehnert, 30 September 1937, StGA; see Norton, *Secret Germany*, 734–35.

[81] Robert Boehringer to the author, 10 June 1968; Georg Peter Landmann to the author, 31 August 1968; Karl Josef Partsch to Walter Greischel, March 1963, StGA; Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 2:182–83.

[82] Thormaehlen, *Erinnerungen*, 287.

[83] Karl Josef Partsch to Walter Greischel, March 1963, StGA.

[84] Michael Stettler, *Begegnungen mit dem Meister: Erinnerungen an Stefan George* (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper vormals Georg Bondi, 1970), 11, 34.

[85] Stefan George to Frank Mehnert, [ca. 19 and 20] July 1933, StGA; Berthold Graf Stauffenberg to Stefan George, 27/28 June 1933, StGA; Claus Graf Stauffenberg to Stefan George, 21 June 1933, StGA; Berthold Graf Stauffenberg to Maria Classen [beginning of August; 17 August; between 25 and 31 August; and 31 August 1933], papers of Maria Classen; Karl Josef Partsch to Walter Greischel, March 1963, StGA; Partsch, information to the author 14 July 1972; Thormaehlen, *Erinnerungen*, 283; Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 2:188, 300; Walter Kempner to the author, interview, 6 January 1984; *ZT*, 386–87; Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen*, 233.

[86] Stefan George to Frank Mehnert, [23 Sept. 1933,] StGA; Berthold Graf Stauffenberg to Frank Mehnert, 29 September 1933; Robert Boehringer, "Bericht über das Verhalten beim Tode und bei der Bestattung von Stefan George," Locarno, 9 December 1933, StGA; Berthold Graf Stauffenberg to Maria Classen, [27 Sept. 1933], papers of Maria Classen; [Alexander Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg], "Der Tod des Meisters: Zum zehnten Jahrestag," manuscript, n.p., [1944], StGA; [Alexander Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg], *Der Tod des Meisters: Zum zehnten Jahrestag* (Munich: Delfinverlag, 1945); Alexander [Schenk Graf von] Stauffenberg, *Der Tod des Meisters: Zum zehnten Jahrestag* (n.p.: Delfinverlag, 1948); Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 2:189–92; *ZT*, 389–90. Wolfskehl, who was staying in Locarno at the time, tried in vain to arrange a meeting with the Master; towards the end of October, George replied that he was too ill to receive him: see Norton, *Secret Germany*, 737–38.

[87] Boehringer, "Bericht"; Boehringer, *Mein Bild*, 2:191; Claus Graf Stauffenberg's wake lists, StGA; Stettler, *Begegnungen*, 39–44; Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Brüder*, 510n138.

[88] Boehringer, "Bericht"; Schlayer to the author, 6 January 1984; Kempner to the author, 6 January 1984; Mehnert, notes, 26 September 1937, StGA; Salin, *Kantorowicz*, 7. Wolfskehl arrived at 7:00 AM on 6 December. Michael Landmann's contention that Mehnert had prevented Wolfskehl's timely arrival is as unfounded as his claim that Mehnert had prevented Wolfskehl from visiting George during his illness: see Michael Landmann, "Literatur um Stefan George," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 14 November 1971; see also Georg Peter Landmann, notes [December 1971], StGA; Stettler to Michael Landmann, 8 June 1972, StGA; Boehringer to Stettler, 6 July 1972, StGA.

[89] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 746, places Claus Stauffenberg's attempt to overthrow Hitler in the context of his Georgean discipleship; Karlauf, 638–39, similarly, establishes a causal nexus between George's thought and Stauffenberg's actions in 1944; throughout his book *Geheimes Deutschland. Stefan George und die Brüder Stauffenberg* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), Manfred Riedel, drawing on sources used by others more than a decade ago, suggests that the Stauffenberg brothers acted in the spirit of George's works as well as his teaching; he fails to produce any concrete evidence. Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister. Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009), 526–28, argues that Stauffenberg remained indebted to George's thought until the end of his life, but expressly stops short of ascribing his assassination attempt to George's teaching: "Wer will, kann die gesamte Haltung des Attentäters auf das Wirken des Dichters und seine Bildung eines Erwählten — eines moralischen Größen-Ich — zurückführen. Nur eines, das Entscheidende, lässt sich aus der Erziehung durch George nicht herleiten: der *Entschluss* zur Tat." Nonetheless, Raulff suggests that George created "die Disposition oder Bedingung der Möglichkeit" for Stauffenberg's decision to assassinate Hitler. The existing evidence does not support any of these interpretations.

[90] He told a friend, Major Ludwig Freiherr von Leonrod, that his Catholic faith required him to act contrary to the oath he had sworn to Hitler: Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg*, 202. For further documentation of Stauffenberg's motives, see also 86, 151–52, 159, 192, 203.

[91] Peter Hoffmann, *Stauffenbergs Freund. Die tragische Geschichte des Widerstandskämpfers Joachim Kuhn* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2007), 190–91.

[92] Hoffmann, *Stauffenbergs Freund*, 190–91. Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 527, claims that I overemphasized "das Meister-Schüler-Verhältnis der beiden [George and Stauffenberg] sowie die ungeheure moralische Autorität des Älteren über den Jüngeren" in my biography of Stauffenberg and thereby continued a line of interpretation begun sixty years ago by Edgar Salin, which posits George's influence as the central inspiration for Stauffenberg's attempted assassination of Hitler. He has evidently misread my book.

[93] Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg: A Family History*, 145, 151.

[94] Thomas Karlauf, "Den Dolch im Lorbeerstrauße tragen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 November 2007.

[95] *GA*, 3:115; *GA*, 6/7:191; *GA*, 8:103; see also *GA*, 9:112.

[96] Norton, *Secret Germany*, 363; see *GA*, 2:107; *GA*, 6/7, 31; *GA*, 9, 29, 42, 84, 87.
[97] Edith Landmann, "An die deutschen Juden," 7.
[98] See above, and also Karl Wolfskehl to Albert Verwey, 15 September, 26 October 1932, in *Wolfskehl und Verwey*, 266–67, 270–73.
[99] Stefan George to Frank Mehnert, 4 and 16 March 1932, StGA; Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Brüder*, 110.
[100] Silvio Markees to the author, 23 June 1984. Hans Naumann, "Stefan George und das Neue Reich," *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* 48 (1934): 273–86; here, 276, claims, without referencing any sources and, as far as one can see, without any personal knowledge: "Er [George] hat sich wohlgefühlt in der Umgebung der jungen braunen Garde des Reichs und hat sein Mahl mit ihnen gern geteilt." Ernst Glöckner, *Begegnung mit Stefan George: Auszüge aus Briefen und Tagebüchern, 1913–1934*, ed. Friedrich Adam (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1972), 200, contains a letter of 6 December 1933, in which Glöckner records rumors to the effect that George, over the course of the year, had been socializing with unknown SA men; George "[solle] im letzten Jahr immer unbekannte SA Männer bei sich zu Tisch gehabt haben, die er sich zur Verköstigung hatte zuweisen lassen." Nothing of this can be verified; in light of George's daily routines the account seems highly implausible. Friedrich Adam, the editor of Glöckner's *Begegnung*, surmises that the source of these rumours was Naumann. Immediately after George's death, Naumann held a commemorative lecture at the University of Bonn.
[101] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke*, 3:531–38.
[102] *GA*, 6/7:31.

13: Stauffenberg: The Search for a Motive

Thomas Karlauf

When Stefan George is discussed today outside the seminar rooms of German departments, it is usually in the context of Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg. At the end of his expansive study *Secret Germany: Stefan George and His Circle*, Robert Norton, too, touches on Stauffenberg and his plot to assassinate Hitler. Having devoted more than seven hundred pages to demonstrate, with the zeal of an inquisitor, that a direct line led from George to Hitler, Norton's decision to conclude his book with a portrait of Stauffenberg seems somewhat puzzling. It is by no means clear why Stauffenberg, who had been passionately committed to George since the age of fifteen and who ranked amongst the most faithful custodians of his Master's legacy, should decide, ten years after the latter's death in 1933, to kill, of all people, the man whose policies, according to Norton, represented the realization of George's prophecy. Norton himself, in fact, seems slightly confounded by this paradox, as is evident in the final sentences of his book: "To the end, then, Stauffenberg remained loyal to the ideals he had learned from Stefan George. We will never know if Stauffenberg ever considered whether those ideals themselves, and the man who had preached them, had helped to create the one he tried to destroy."[1]

In the summer of 2007, Stauffenberg became the center of public attention in the run-up to the release of a Hollywood blockbuster based on the events of the 1944 bomb plot starring Tom Cruise. When the film finally reached the German screens in January 2009, the Cambridge historian Richard Evans was one of the first to question the motives that informed the actions of Stauffenberg and his fellow conspirators in "Operation Valkyrie," the code word that lent the picture its title. In an article for the magazine supplement of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a leading German daily, published on 23 January 2009, Evans observed that Stauffenberg's assassination attempt was inspired by the neo-Romantic ideals of Stefan George — ideals, he pointed out, that were already long defunct in 1944. According to Evans, Stauffenberg's belief that Europe could exist only under German leadership was as anachronistic as his desire for the restoration of a corporate state. A man who had shown nothing but contempt, all his life, for parliamentarian democracy, Evans remarked, could hardly serve as a "Vorbild für künftige Generationen."[2]

If attachment to the principles of parliamentarian democracy were to be the sole criterion for identifying matters of interest and exemplarity from the past, then a lot of historical scholarship no doubt would quickly become superfluous. Why study Stauffenberg, then? To Evans, he appears to be little more than a victim of his own delusions, though he evinced a degree of moral responsibility insofar as he became aware of and tried to atone for his own earlier complicity with the Nazi regime. It is this willingness to take responsibility, this "moralische Geste," according to Evans, that constitutes the redemptive quality of Stauffenberg's action — and its historical significance. But to claim that Stauffenberg conceived the bomb plot primarily as a moral gesture is absurd, because it turns the entire notion of a coup d'état on its head. Stauffenberg acted out of a particular kind of patriotism — not with an eye to his moral or historical legacy. In a reply to Evans's article, the famous German literary scholar and journalist Karl-Heinz Bohrer rightly described the comments of the British historian as "reichlich naiv, aber auch scheinheilig" and "nicht ohne Infamie."[3]

Robert Norton, meanwhile, has offered a different explanation of Stauffenberg's motives in the bomb plot. The question as to how the disciple of Stefan George could have become the would-be assassin of Hitler now strikes him as misconceived. In an article for the prestigious German weekly *Die Zeit*, published in July 2009, Norton argued that when he conspired against and tried to assassinate Hitler, Stauffenberg no longer acted as a student and follower of Stefan George. In order to be able to even envision the assassination attempt, Norton claims, Stauffenberg had to emancipate himself from the ideas and ideals of his one-time Master: "Als Stauffenberg seinen unvorstellbar mutigen und einsamen Versuch unternahm, hat er sich von zentralen Idealen und Werten Georges losgesagt. Stauffenberg hat die Achtung, die man ihm jetzt zuerkennt, auf schwerste Weise verdient. Dafür verdient aber Stefan George keine."[4] However, to ask whether Stauffenberg was able to recognize that the Georgean ideals he once embraced had allowed the rise of Hitler is to put the cart before the horse. As will be shown in the following, Stauffenberg did not resolve to kill Hitler because he realized that George's worldview was flawed, but because he realized that his own ideals had been betrayed by Hitler.

After his arrest on 21 July 1944, Berthold von Stauffenberg, Claus's older brother, made the following statement in the course of his interrogation by the Gestapo:

> Auf innerpolitischem Gebiet hatten wir die Grundideen des Nationalsozialismus zum größten Teil durchaus bejaht . . . Der Gedanke des Führertums, der selbstverantwortlichen und sachverständigen Führung, verbunden mit dem einer gesunden Rangordnung und dem der Volksgemeinschaft, der Grundsatz "Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz" und der Kampf gegen die Korruption, die Betonung des Bäuerlichen und der Kampf gegen

> den Geist der Großstädte, der Rassegedanke und der Wille zu einer neuen, deutsch bestimmten Rechtsordnung erschien uns gesund und zukunftsträchtig.[5]

Over time, however, Berthold went on to say, these "Grundideen" had "in der Durchführung durch das Regime fast alle in ihr Gegenteil verkehrt worden."[6] The central principles that Berthold enumerated here, drawing on National Socialist terminology, already featured in the appeal the two Stauffenberg brothers had drafted on the eve of the assassination attempt of July 1944, an appeal that was intended to provide a moral justification for their planned coup. In this appeal, they invoked the German "Volk" which they said was so deeply "in der Erde der Heimat verwurzelt" that it would be able to withstand all manifestations of envy and resentment from outside. Guided by leaders ("Führer") drawn from all segments of society ("aus allen Schichten des Volkes"), the German nation would advance "durch grossen Sinn, Zucht und Opfer." The future, post-Nazi Germany would be restructured as a feudal society and reorganized according to the principles of rulership (*Herrschaft*) and service (*Dienst*): "Wir wollen eine Neue Ordnung die alle Deutschen zu Trägern des Staates macht und ihnen Recht und Gerechtigkeit verbürgt, verachten aber die Gleichheitslüge und beugen uns vor den naturgegebenen Rängen."[7]

Claus and Berthold von Stauffenberg composed this appeal on 4 July 1944, as a kind of political testament. Its arguments and its wording — this is particularly evident in Claus's final handwritten corrections — betray their profound indebtedness to the thought of Stefan George. In numerous poems, George had voiced his contempt for the rise of the masses and their politicization through the dominant ideologies of the nineteenth century, especially socialism, with its emphasis on self-emancipation, self-government, and social equality. For George, the masses were not only unfit to govern themselves, but their social and political empowerment spelt disaster for the cultural destiny of Germany and Europe: "Schon eure zahl ist frevel."[8] He believed that political *Herrschaft* should be reserved for a small aristocratic elite, outstanding individuals such as the "kaloikagathoi" (the beautiful and the good) of ancient Greece who would be singled out during childhood and prepared for their future roles in the state, among other things by dint of military service. George evidently believed that the small group of mostly young men he had gathered around himself in his Circle would form the core of the new *kaloikagathoi* for the twentieth century:

> Ich sah von fern getümmel einer schlacht
> So wie sie bald in unsren ebnen kracht.
> Ich sah die kleine schar ums banner stehn.
> Und alle andren haben nichts gesehn. (*G*, 339)

In George's eyes, not only the future of Germany, but the fate of the entire European continent lay in the hands of this "kleine Schar." In one of his programmatic poems, written towards the end of the First World War, when Germany's defeat seemed imminent, George reiterated what he claimed was an ancient prophecy: "dass einst / Des erdteils herz die welt erretten soll" (*G*, 418).

The notion that the German nation would one day be called upon to redeem European civilization indeed had a long history. Initially, this work of redemption was conceived in predominantly cultural and intellectual terms. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hölderlin expressed the philhellenist credo that it was Germany's destiny to restore the glories of ancient Greece and thus revive contemporary European culture. A hundred years later, many German intellectuals still believed that the ancient Greek genius was now incarnate in Germany's *Dichter* and *Denker* and that it found expression in their works. Claus and Berthold von Stauffenberg alluded to this idea in their oath: "Wir bekennen uns im Geist und in der Tat zu den grossen Überlieferungen unseres Volkes, das durch die Verschmelzung hellenischer und christlicher Ursprünge im germanischen Wesen das abendländische Menschentum schuf." It was this unique "synthesis" (*Verschmelzung*) of *Deutschtum* and hellenism that gave the German people a privileged role in the great task of trans-European cultural renewal ("die Gemeinschaft der abendländischen Völker zu schönerem Leben zu führen").[9]

It is exceedingly difficult, in our day and age, to properly assess this belief in Germany's special calling or "mission" that lies at the heart of the oath drafted by the Stauffenberg brothers in July 1944. To us, it seems outlandish at best and positively eerie at worst. The authors of this text appear to inhabit a different mental and moral universe. Their fundamental elitism, to which they remained attached until the bitter end, and their unmitigated arrogance make them look suspicious to a contemporary observer, especially when contrasted with certain other members of the German resistance to Hitler. One searches in vain in the papers of Claus von Stauffenberg for evidence of the Christian-humanist or Enlightenment-universalist convictions that marked the relevant statements by members of the so-called Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*) or the Kreisauer Kreis. None of his written statements reveal the kind of altruism and compassion that one finds in the leaflets of the White Rose or in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's prison letters; there are no signs that Stauffenberg experienced the kind of moral dilemmas — or that he engaged in the kind of soul-searching reflections on complicity and guilt — that are so conspicuous in Helmuth James Graf von Moltke's letters to his wife Freya. What stands out is the audacity of the two brothers in devising their plan and their cold determination to follow through with it, even when it had become apparent that it was likely to fail. Several days before the attempt,

Claus coolly acknowledged that he would be considered a traitor to his fatherland were the coup to go awry. On 14 July, Berthold told his wife: "Das Furchtbarste ist, zu wissen, daß es nicht gelingen kann und daß man es dennoch für unser Land und unsere Kinder tun muß."[10]

Before examining in closer detail the ways in which the intellectual milieu of the George Circle shaped the ideas behind the bomb plot, two qualifying statements need to be made. First, there are no straightforward "directives" in George's poetry that could be cited to explain what happened on 20 July 1944. To understand Claus von Stauffenberg's motives, one needs to look at what might be called the *mentalité* of the Circle, that is, the set of — often loosely defined and sometimes unspoken — values and ideals, the particular inclinations and dispositions that George sought to foster in his followers, as well as the fears and hopes that imbued them. Second, the Circle was by no means the only source of inspiration for Claus von Stauffenberg. His actions in July 1944 were conditioned by family traditions and military values no less than by the ideals of Stefan George. There were three sources of inspiration that shaped Stauffenberg's thinking in equal measure, and all three were interrelated. For instance, Stauffenberg looked up to his ancestor August Neidhardt von Gneisenau, the Prussian field marshal and military reformer who had played a decisive role in the so-called Wars of Liberation against Napoleon (1813–15), as an embodiment of both family and military traditions. A strong sense of elitism and hierarchy, as well as the belief in the primacy of the deed (*die Tat*), were instilled in him in the German army as much as in the George Circle. If the figure of Gneisenau represented the link between family and military for Stauffenberg, his older brother Berthold, who was both a revered role model and one of George's closest confidants, united the spheres of the family and the Circle. In the eyes of Claus, Berthold's innate authority was further enhanced by George's charisma. In 1923, Claus composed the following lines for Berthold: "Ich habe herrschaft dir und mir geschworen: / Das wissen das der Meister gab zu kund."[11] Berthold's impact on Claus's thinking can hardly be overestimated. Claus discussed all important decisions with his older brother, whose opinion was of paramount importance to him. The decisions taken in the run-up to July 1944 were no exception. Marion Yorck von Wartenburg, a relative by marriage and, together with her husband Peter, another member of the opposition to Hitler, recalls that Claus did not do anything "was sein Bruder Berthold nicht wusste und billigte," and that Berthold was "das verkörperte Gewissen seines Bruders Claus."[12]

There can be little doubt, however, that alongside family traditions and the ethos of the German army, the values of the George Circle informed Stauffenberg's resolution to oppose and, eventually, to kill Hitler. To grasp these values and to understand the specific *mentalité* of the Circle, one needs to take a closer look at George's poetry that played

a central role in the social and cultural life of his followers. The key text was *Der Stern des Bundes* (1914), which George described as a secret book, and which functioned as a kind of arcanum for the esoteric community of his disciples. That the volume was originally to be published under the title "Lieder an die heilige Schar" already suggests its quasi-religious significance. It laid out George's pedagogical program in three books of thirty poems each, framed by a celebratory introit and a culminating "final chorus" composed of twelve lines invoking a deity. The disciples were supposed to find in the thousand-odd lines of verse contained in *Der Stern des Bundes* the answers to all their questions and the norms by which they were to organize their relations with George, amongst each other, and to the outside world. These norms were based on two cornerstones. The first was unconditional reverence towards the Master as a superior human being. The second was the conviction that the new ideas and insights generated by George could be transmitted only in loving relationships between older and younger men. Irrespective of the actual nature and extent of homosexuality within the Circle, the general prohibition of homosexuality in German society forced the Master and his disciples to screen off their relationships from the outside world, which contributed a considerable degree to the popular perception of the Circle as a highly exclusive *Männerbund*.

The George Circle, however, was not a secretive homosexual clique. Nor was it a coterie of aesthetes entirely detached from worldly affairs. It was a community of intellectuals engaged in the task of transforming not just the life of individuals, but of the entire nation or *Volk*. The members of the Circle conceived of this task in terms of a long-standing, and as yet unresolved, problem in the realm of German thought: the relationship between spirit (*Geist*) and political power (*Macht*). In *Der Stern des Bundes*, George formulated this problem as a question: "Kommt wort vor tat kommt tat vor wort?" (*G*, 359). It was a rhetorical question, for George had already made clear that *Geist* and its various manifestations were to take precedence. At least since the turn of the century, his poetic enunciations were marked by the conviction "dass in der dichtung eines volkes sich seine lezten schicksale enthüllen,"[13] as he remarked in a contribution to the *Blätter für die Kunst*. In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, he seemed inclined to play a more active part in the political realm and to fashion himself as a national poet, but ultimately he resigned himself to the role of critical observer. Six months after the armistice, he informed Ernst Robert Curtius: "Die geistigen Lösungen sind schon alle gefunden . . . die Ereignisse hinken immer schwerfällig nach."[14]

George expected his disciples to take a similar position and to refrain from any premature interventions in political affairs. They were to lie in wait and prepare themselves for the great tasks ahead. Still George left lit-

tle doubt that their contributions to the achievement of those tasks would be decisive. In his poems, he instilled in them the belief that nothing less than the fate of Western civilization depended on their intervention. In the meantime, their very existence guaranteed that nothing would be irretrievably lost and that there was hope for the future: "In fahr und fron wenn wir nur überdauern hat jeder tag mit einem sieg sein ende" (*G*, 277). Throughout the Weimar years, the Circle was imbued with an almost millenarian sense of expectation that led them to view the current crises as mere harbingers of a much more comprehensive upheaval in which they would play a crucial role.

The members of the Circle, thus, by no means secluded themselves from the "here and now." George often stressed that those who wanted to follow him had to prove themselves in everyday life. He was suspicious of enthusiasts who sought in his presence refuge from the real world and consolation for its disappointments and frustrations. To live the beautiful life within a cloistered circle of friends was one thing — "Die starken heute sind die gestern schönen" — (*G*, 393) but to manifest and realize the Master's maxims outside the Circle was no less important. For George, the only true disciples were those who managed to turn all aspects of their lives into instantiations of his poetry. The very distinction between fiction and reality, in fact, he claimed was transcended in his verse where "landschaft geistig wird und traum zu wesen" (*G*, 379). In an early essay for the *Blätter für die Kunst* he had already anticipated this view: "Es bedeutet etwa dasselbe wenn wir sagen: traumbilder die bezaubern wie wirklichkeiten oder wirklichkeiten die bezaubern wie traumbilder."[15] One of the most important conditions for accession to the Circle, consequently, was the willingness to be enchanted. Claus von Stauffenberg displayed this willingness to a great degree.

Stauffenberg's correspondence with Frank Mehnert in the fall of 1939, only recently made available, shows how powerfully his perception of reality was conditioned by George's vision of the world. Mehnert had attended the Eberhard-Ludwigs-Gymnasium in Stuttgart with Claus and was introduced to George by Berthold von Stauffenberg in 1924. In the last three years of George's life, he became the Master's closest companion. In the fall of 1939, Mehnert was working on a life-size statue, to be erected on the *Pionierbrücke* in Magdeburg, for which Stauffenberg acted as a model. Since Germany's invasion of Poland on 1 September, Europe had been at war, a state of affairs that Stauffenberg did not assess in entirely negative terms: "Das eigentümliche und alles andre überschattende und in sich einschliessende am Krieg ist, dass alle Dinge ein andres Licht gewinnen, und zwar werden sie schärfer, klarer, in jeder Hinsicht unerbittlicher. Zum wirklichen Soldaten gehört eben doch auch der wirkliche Krieg." The war in Poland, he told Mehnert four weeks later, was only the beginning of a much greater conflict: "Aber all das war ja nur Anfang, das

eigentliche kommt erst. [. . .] über den endgültigen sieg . . . entscheidet das grössere herz, die umfassendere anschauung [. . .] Jeden augenblick kann der ruf an uns ergehn, oder noch eine generation muss als dung für spätre ernte dienen." Stauffenberg greeted Hitler's war as a great existential experience: "So nähert uns der Krieg in manchem wieder der unbedingtheit der knabenjahre auf einer anderen ebene . . . vieles hat durch den Krieg erst wieder die vollen lebendigen farben bekommen . . . Wir sind jedenfalls froh im bewusstsein dass unser leben wieder einmal in jeder hinsicht dem privaten entzogen ist."[16]

However, when Mehnert, towards the end of 1939, wavered between developing his artistic skills by taking a trip to Greece and joining the German war effort, Stauffenberg urged him to go to Greece:

> Du könntest gewiss das Neue und zweite Kriegsjahr nicht besser eröffnen, als wenn du die stätten hellenischer vergangenheit und Deutscher gegenwart besuchst . . . Inzwischen ist das meiste was geschehen kann, dass die schönheit dieses Landes erhalten bleibt, dass in den langen vor uns liegenden jahren eines herben und gewiss recht eintönigen kampfes der reichtum dieses volks nicht verloren geht, dass das "Deutsche Wunder" weiter dies Land behütet. Selbst das Meisterliche Wort würde uns nichts mehr helfen können wenn es nicht in einigen weiterlebte, so aber kann es und wird es noch wunder wirken.[17]

According to Ulrich Raulff, who was the first to draw on these letters for his 2009 book on George's "afterlife," Stauffenberg's reflections suggest that in 1939 the young *Generalstabsoffizier* was fighting not just Hitler's war of conquest, but also George's clandestine war for the Secret Germany.

In the summer of the previous year, Berthold von Stauffenberg had been negotiating with the city of Bingen on behalf of George's heirs. At issue were the donation of the poet's parental home to the city and the renaming of the local *Gymnasium* after him. On 22 July 1938, Berthold met with the city councilor Wagner for a two-hour conversation, in the course of which the latter voiced tentative reservations with regard to George's allegiance to the new regime, observing that his purported decision not to be buried in German soil had prompted enquiries by the Gestapo. Berthold, in whose eyes suspicions such as this bordered on slander, pointed to his uniform in order to assure Wagner that his worries were unfounded: "Hier beruhigte ich und wies auf meine Uniform und dass ich mich nie scheuen würde mich zur Auskunft zur verfügung zu stellen." Wagner seemed "sehr dankbar für die anregung wenn etwas geschähe sich vertrauensvoll an uns zu wenden" and suggested that George's heirs name a speaker for the planned festivities to mark the renaming of the school.[18] As long as some functionaries of the Nazi state failed to appreciate

George's stance towards the new Germany, however, he advised the heirs not to invoke him as its prophet: "Die frage der verkündung des 3. Reichs wäre möglichst aus dem spiel zu lassen, . . . denn früher oder später würden es doch die dümmsten merken."[19]

One and a half years later, on 24 January 1940, the house of George's parents, located on Hintere Grube, was bequeathed to the city of Bingen. The youngest of George's followers, Karl Josef "Cajo" Partsch, had drawn up a twenty-five-page inventory of books, furnishings, and fixtures, which he confirmed in a subsequent inspection, carried out with representatives of the city. Claus von Stauffenberg then handed over the keys: "Nach der verlesung überreichte Cl[aus] die schlüssel und sagte einige worte, die ihren zweck offenbar nicht verfehlten . . . Einen gemeinsamen trunk wusste Cl. geschickt zu vermeiden." After he had signed the inventory — "Für die Erben Stefan Georges: Claus Graf Stauffenberg. Hauptmann im Genst" — he walked to Büdesheim with Partsch in order to visit, for the first time, the house where George was born. Partsch recalled the visit in a letter to Mehnert: "Das tal und die weinberge lagen in tiefem schnee — ein ganz neues bild."[20] Finally they called on a stonemason in Bingen to identify a suitable gravestone for the poet's sister, who had died in December 1938.

Insofar as he was a member of both the Circle and the general staff of the German army, Claus von Stauffenberg was well-placed to represent George's heirs after 1933. The latter, however, were not always of one mind when it came to overseeing the estate of their former Master. In the spring of 1938, the forthcoming edition of George's correspondence with Hugo von Hofmannsthal threw into relief their disagreements. While the principal heir, Robert Boehringer, who lived in Geneva and refused to set foot in Nazi Germany, argued for the unrestricted publication of all extant letters, Berthold von Stauffenberg, a beneficiary, and his representative Frank Mehnert wanted to excise anything that could possibly compromise George's reputation. To publish letters that George himself had desired to keep secret, they maintained, would go against his will. Boehringer strongly objected to this form of posthumous censorship. On 19 June 1938, he wrote Berthold von Stauffenberg and Frank Mehnert: "[Ich habe] mit schrecken erkannt, wie verschieden wir empfinden: wo ich d[en] M[eister] sehe und nur d[en] M[eister] gross, glühend, nicht nachlassend, da bedenken Sie, welche missverständnisse bei welchem schelm oder dummkopf entstehen könnten. Das macht mich recht besorgt für künftige gemeinsame arbeit."[21]

One week later, Berthold visited Claus in Wannsee, where they discussed the progress of the negotiations with the city of Bingen as well as Boehringer's position in the dispute over George's correspondence. "Was soll man da noch sagen?" Claus wrote Mehnert the same evening, on 26 June 1938:

> Will er oder kann er uns nicht mehr verstehen? Ich bin wirklich recht deprimiert. Es ist wie ein hohn wenn aussenstehende wie neulich der trefflich[e] Stadtrat vermeinen verhandlungspartner sei sozusagen "der Kreis" der in seiner geschlossenheit von den Erben R[obert] und B[erthold] rechtlich vertreten wird. Der ton der briefe ist so dass man zweifeln muss ob durch mündliche aussprache sich noch viel ändern wird. Etwas derartig schiefes wie die stellungnahme zu den briefen d[es] M[eister]s an Dr. v[on] H[ofmannsthal] ist schwer vorstellbar. Die nächste konsequenz müsste dann doch sein dass man wahllos alles was überhaupt vom M[eister] hinterlassen ist und das publikum noch nicht kennt, schleunigst in die menge wirft![22]

Claus thus defended his brother's stance with considerable determination. Four years earlier, in 1934, Berthold had refused to give permission for the photographic reproduction of George's death mask in the final volume of the collected works, because the heirs had no right, he argued, to create such a sense of finality. The Stauffenberg brothers obviously were anxious to preserve a particular image of their deceased Master. To that end, Berthold made Claus an additional beneficiary of George's estate, in lieu of Frank Mehnert who had been killed in battle in February 1943.

What was the image of George that Stauffenberg had fashioned for himself and what was the nature of their relationship? To answer these questions, one has to take a closer look at the final years of George's life. George spent his last three summers in Wasserburg on Lake Constance. Among the few followers gathered around him on these occasions were Frank Mehnert as well as Berthold and Claus von Stauffenberg. Between 1931 and 1933, Claus would regularly leave Bamberg towards the end of July or the beginning of August to stay with George for eight to ten days. Whenever he returned to Berlin in 1931 and 1932, George, for his part, would pay Claus a visit. Such opportunities to be in close company with the Master for an extended period of time had become rare and were treasured by an increasingly small inner circle of followers, whom George fondly described as his *Staatsstützen* or "pillars of his state." When George met his *Staatsstützen* in those years, he usually talked to them about current affairs, sometimes in a humorous, often mocking tone. He would discuss times past as well as the latest sculptural works by Ludwig Thormaehlen, Alexander Zschokke, or Frank Mehnert. Other topics of conversation were the group excursions undertaken to those sites that George had declared holy and the education of the younger disciples. Much time was devoted to the perusal and interpretation of texts; poems were recited, copied, and memorized. All of this contributed to the internalization of "Georgean" norms and values, which continued to shape the lives of the disciples long after their Master's death.

Such forms of influence, to be sure, are not easy to define or to analyze. But a grasp of the structures, the *mentalité*, and the dissemination of

ideas in the George Circle in the late 1920s and early 1930s is essential if one wants to comprehend the motivations for Stauffenberg's decision to assassinate Hitler. The claim that there was a direct causal relation between Stauffenberg's attachment to George and his actions in July 1944 formed the core of the myth of the "geheimes Deutschland" in the early years of the Federal Republic. Edgar Salin, a former member of the Heidelberg Circle, a subgrouping of the George Circle that had formed around Friedrich Gundolf, was one of the original propagators of this myth, which was aimed at clearing George of the "protofascist" charge levelled against him after the Second World War. With the help of his student Marion Dönhoff, Salin sought to exonerate George by arguing, in a series of articles published between 1945 and 1948, that it was George's notion of a Secret Germany that inspired Claus von Stauffenberg to undertake his attempt on Hitler's life. Salin was one of the first to allege that Stauffenberg's last words, uttered seconds before he was executed by a firing squad in the inner courtyard of the Bendlerblock in Berlin on 21 July 1944, were an allusion to this Georgean ideal: "Es lebe das geheime Deutschland!"[23] What Stauffenberg actually called out as he stood before the firing squad shortly after midnight — "Es lebe das geheime Deutschland!" or "Es lebe das heilige Deutschland!" — has remained a matter of continuous debate. Focused as it is on historical facticity, such controversy seems sterile. Even if it could be proved that Stauffenberg did not actually invoke the Secret Germany before he died, this would still not discount the possibility that he could have chosen to do so.

The concept of a Secret Germany was as vague and enigmatic in the context of 20 July 1944 as it was in the middle of the 1920s, when it began to gain wider currency in the Circle. George had told his followers in a long poem, entitled "Geheimes Deutschland" and composed in the style of Hölderlin's late hymns, that the fate of Germany in a time of cultural and political decline depended on the actions of an elite that abjured the hustle and bustle of the modern world. The very existence of such an elite, George's poem suggested, bore witness to the continued presence of the divine in the world and thus contained the promise of future regeneration. In the spring of 1924, the epithet graced the bow on a laurel wreath that associates of the Circle, including Erika Wolters, Albrecht von Blumenthal, and Ernst Kantorowicz, laid on the tomb of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) in Palermo cathedral: "Seinen Kaisern und Helden / Das Geheime Deutschland." Berthold von Stauffenberg was amongst the group that had made the pilgrimage to Sicily that year, on the traces of and in homage to the medieval ruler whom George had called "der grösste Friedrich," and whose "welthaltig" or universal conception of *Deutschtum* the disciples regarded as an anticipation of George's notion of a Roman Germany. As Erika Wolters put it in a letter of April 1924: "Ich suchte Friedrich II. und fand den Meister."[24]

Frederick II was idolized in the Circle as the "End- und Erfüllungskaiser der deutschen Träume," a unique embodiment of what they considered the genius of the German nation. It was under his rule in the first half of the thirteenth century, they believed, that a new type of German emerged, one that combined the best characteristics of the North with the spirit of the Mediterranean. Roman antiquity provided the model for the creation of this new Germanness, a "römisch-antikes Deutschtum" that manifested itself in the sculptures adorning the cathedrals in Bamberg, Naumburg, and Magdeburg. According to one of the younger members of the Circle, Ernst Kantorowicz, these sculptures hinted at the possibility "eines zugleich weltweiten und dennoch deutschen Wesens." The equestrian statue known as the Bamberg Rider ("der Bamberger Reiter") in particular indicated "dass jener schöne und ritterlich adlige Menschentypus damals in Deutschland gelebt haben muss."[25]

As early as 1921, Kantorowicz had begun to work on a biography of Frederick II. George, who had suggested the topic to his disciple, followed the gestation of Kantorowicz's work with keen interest.[26] When *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* appeared in 1927, it instantly triggered a fierce historiographical debate, which revolved largely around the author's liberal use of myths and legends. The book opens with the famous messianic prophecy from Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* that foretells the birth of a universal ruler who is said to bring world peace and usher in a new golden age — a variation on what we have identified as a recurrent theme in George's writing — namely, the idea that poetic vision precedes political action (in this case, the foundation of a new Reich). Just as Virgil foretold the Augustan empire and Dante envisioned the revival of the Holy Roman Empire, so George was the poet and prophet of the future German Reich that was to succeed the Weimar Republic.

Complementing the Virgilian prophecy at the beginning of his book, Kantorowicz concluded his account of Frederick's reign by invoking the Kyffhäuser myth. By framing his biography in this way, he made the life of his protagonist both relevant and alien to his contemporary audience. According to the most widely disseminated version of the myth, the emperor inhabiting the Kyffhäuser Mountain was not Frederick II, but his grandfather Frederick I (ca. 1122–90), known as Frederick Barbarossa. Throughout the nineteenth century, patriotic poets had invoked Frederick Barbarossa as a savior of the nation, who would leave his abode in the mountain and defend Germany in her moment of need. And it was the resurrection of Frederick Barbarossa that was celebrated in the wake of Germany's emergence as a nation-state, Bismarck's foundation of the Second German Empire in 1871. Frederick II, meanwhile, remained unredeemed, as Kantorowicz insinuated in the final lines of his book: "Wäre nicht Barbarossas Enkel, so stände der Berg heute leer. . doch der größte Friedrich ist bis heut nicht erlöst, den sein Volk weder fasste noch füllte.

'Er lebt und lebt nicht'. . nicht mehr den Kaiser: des Kaisers Volk meint der Spruch der Sybille."[27] Kantorowicz's concluding reference to "des Kaisers Volk," the people who would redeem their true emperor, the greater Frederick — that is, Frederick II — was an allusion to the youth gathered around and inspired by George, who were entrusted with the establishment of a new Reich. As George remarked six months after the publication of *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*, if there were a group of young people to perform such a task, "so ist sie nur hier und bei mir."[28]

It was against the backdrop of these ideals and aspirations that George met Berthold and Claus von Stauffenberg in the spring of 1923. George thought it a stroke of fate bordering on the miraculous that he came upon the two brothers at precisely this moment, when his vision of a new German Reich was beginning to crystallize around the figure of a Hohenstaufen emperor or *Stauferkaiser*. Did the Stauffenbergs not share with the Hohenstaufen an ancestral homeland in Swabia? Was not their very name a powerful portent? George was instantly excited by the discovery of the new recruits and his enthusiasm soon affected the members of the Circle. Flush with pride and confidence, the Stauffenberg brothers allowed themselves to be incorporated into George's imagined genealogy. In a poem composed in November 1923, shortly after their accession to the Circle, Claus mused as to what would become of "Ruhm und schönheit wenn nicht wir sie hätten / Des Staufers und Ottonen blonde erben."[29] Berthold, for his part, praised George in hyperbolic terms: "Du bist als heiland dieser welt gesandt."[30]

George's final volume of poetry, *Das neue Reich* (1928), appeared one year after Kantorowicz's biography of Frederick II. Since Hitler's so-called "seizure of power" in January 1933, the majority of George's followers, at least those who were not of Jewish descent, found it hard to distinguish between the "das neue Reich" announced by George and the "das Dritte Reich" proclaimed by the Nazis. Many thought the "German Spring" of 1933 presented new opportunities for the Circle, not least because a number of high-ranking National Socialists considered George an intellectual forefather of their movement — a designation that George himself did not repudiate in his correspondence with the new minister of education, Bernhard Rust, in May 1933. George's letter to Rust, however, contained reflections on the interaction between "spirit" and "power" that seemed to call into question the Nazis' attempted appropriation of him and that would have surprised many of the disciples, taken as they were with Germany's "national awakening": "Die gesetze des geistigen und des politischen sind gewiss sehr verschieden — wo sie sich treffen und wo geist herabsteigt zum allgemeingut das ist ein äusserst verwickelter vorgang."[31]

In order to comprehend Claus von Stauffenberg's motivations in 1944, it is necessary to comprehend this complicated interplay of "die gesetze des geistigen und des politischen" as conceived by George and as invoked in his letter to Rust. It is also necessary to comprehend when and

how Stauffenberg came to dissociate the Third Reich from George's Reich. As long as the Wehrmacht remained victorious, there was no cause for him to discern any contradictions between the political goals of Nazi Germany and the values of George and his Circle. It was only in the wake of the military defeats of 1942–43 that Stauffenberg began to suspect that he had allowed himself to be taken in by the promise of Third Reich and that the self-proclaimed leader of that Reich was now leading the German people to their destruction, as a form of punishment for their failure to prove themselves a master race worthy of his leadership. It was in defiance of this false "Führer," who threatened to annihilate the very possibility of Germany's future role as a European hegemon, that the Stauffenberg brothers declared, in the first sentence of their oath drafted on 4 July 1944: "Wir glauben an die Zukunft der Deutschen."

To be sure, their vision of Germany's — as well as Europe's — future was hardly suitable for the actual work of political reconstruction that was necessary after the Second World War. But to denounce this vision as entirely inappropriate (völlig ungeeignet für eine reale politische Zukunft), as Richard Evans does,[32] is to call into question the ethical motives of the assassination attempt and to underestimate the significance of the act itself. Once he realized that none of his fellow conspirators had the courage to carry out the attempt, Stauffenberg became less interested in working out a political program for the future, post-Nazi Germany, and focused almost entirely on what George had called "the deed" (*die Tat*). This is what distinguished him from all the other people involved in the bomb plot, with the possible exception of Henning von Tresckow.

Stauffenberg was in agreement with the majority of the conspirators, however, in that he realized that the planned coup would not succeed without the prior elimination of Hitler. His resolution to carry out the assassination himself and the great determination with which he proceeded were inspired by the world of George and his Circle. George always saw himself as a man of action and impressed upon his followers as a kind of guiding principle the notion that they had to remain true to and intrepidly defend their ideals, even on pain of death. In numerous poems, he invoked the primacy of action, including political acts such as tyrannicide: "Ihr sollt den dolch im lorbeerstrausse tragen" (*G*, 386).

With the events of July 1944, the "gesetze des geistigen und des politischen" came full circle. The poet who desired to be a man of action begot the man of action for whom the poet's words were both inspiration and highest authority. On 20 July, word and deed merged, if only for moment. Without the bomb plot, the German opposition to Hitler would scarcely be remembered today. Stauffenberg's action marked the point, alluded to in George's letter to Rust of 1933, "wo geist herabsteigt zum allgemeingut." The ways in which George's words shaped this moment are intricate, but nonetheless essential. Their proper investigation has only just begun.

Notes

[1] Robert E. Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and His Circle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2002), 746.
[2] Richard Evans, "Sein wahres Gesicht," *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, 23 January 2009.
[3] Karl Heinz Bohrer, "Die Entlarvung des 20. Juli," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 30 January 2009.
[4] Robert E. Norton, "Lyrik und Moral," *Die Zeit*, 16 July 2009.
[5] Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, ed., *"Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung": Die Opposition gegen Hitler und der Staatsstreich vom 20. Juli 1944 in der SD-Berichterstattung; Geheime Dokumente aus dem ehemaligen Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1984), 447.
[6] Jacobsen, *"Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung,"* 447–48.
[7] Quoted in Peter Hoffmann, *Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg und seine Brüder* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1992), 396–97.
[8] Stefan George, *Werke: Ausgabe in zwei Bänden*, vol. 1 (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1958), 244. Subsequent references to this work are cited in the text using the abbreviation *G* and page number.
[9] Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Brüder*, 396.
[10] Hoffmann, *Stauffenberg und seine Brüder*, 395.
[11] Thomas Karlauf, *Stefan George: Die Entdeckung des Charisma* (Munich: Karl Blessing, 2007), 566.
[12] Eberhard Zeller, *Oberst Claus Graf Stauffenberg: Ein Lebensbild* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1994), 47.
[13] Stefan George, "Vorrede," *Blätter für die Kunst* 11–12 (1919): 6.
[14] Ernst Robert Curtius, *Kritische Essays zur europäischen Literatur*, 2nd ed. (Bern: A. Francke, 1954), 116.
[15] [Stefan George,] "Italien und Niederland," *Blätter für die Kunst* 7 (1904): 8.
[16] Claus von Stauffenberg to Frank Mehnert, 22 October 1939 and 19 November 1939, quoted in Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister: Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 109–10.
[17] Claus von Stauffenberg to Frank Mehnert, "am Stefanstag" [1939], quoted in Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 111.
[18] Claus von Stauffenberg to Frank Mehnert, Bingen 23 June 1938, StGA. I would like to thank the Stefan George Stiftung for allowing me to access and cite this letter as well as the following documents.
[19] Claus von Stauffenberg to Frank Mehnert, Berlin, 27 June 1938, StGA.
[20] Karl Josef Partsch to Frank Mehnert, 27 January 1940, StGA.
[21] Robert Boehringer to Berthold von Stauffenberg and Frank Mehnert, 19 June 1938, StGA.
[22] Claus von Stauffenberg to Frank Mehnert, Berlin-Wannsee, 26 June 1938, StGA.
[23] See Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister*, 420–27.

[24] See Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 555–58.
[25] Ernst Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1927), 197, 76–77.
[26] See Edgar Salin, "Ernst Kantorowicz: 1895–1963," *Historische Zeitschrift* 199, no. 3 (1964): 551–57.
[27] Kantorowicz, *Friedrich der Zweite*, 632.
[28] Ernst Glöckner, *Begegnung mit Stefan George: Auszüge aus Briefen und Tagebüchern 1913–1934*, ed. Friedrich Adam (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1972), 188.
[29] "An PHES [i.e., Berthold Stauffenberg] von Claus im November 1923": StGA. See Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 564.
[30] Berthold Stauffenberg to Stefan George: StGA. See Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 749.
[31] The complete draft by George from 10 May 1933 is reprinted in Karlauf, *Stefan George*, 622.
[32] Evans, "Sein wahres Gesicht."

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